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COURSE #:

ETS 153

COURSE TITLE:

Interpretation of Fiction

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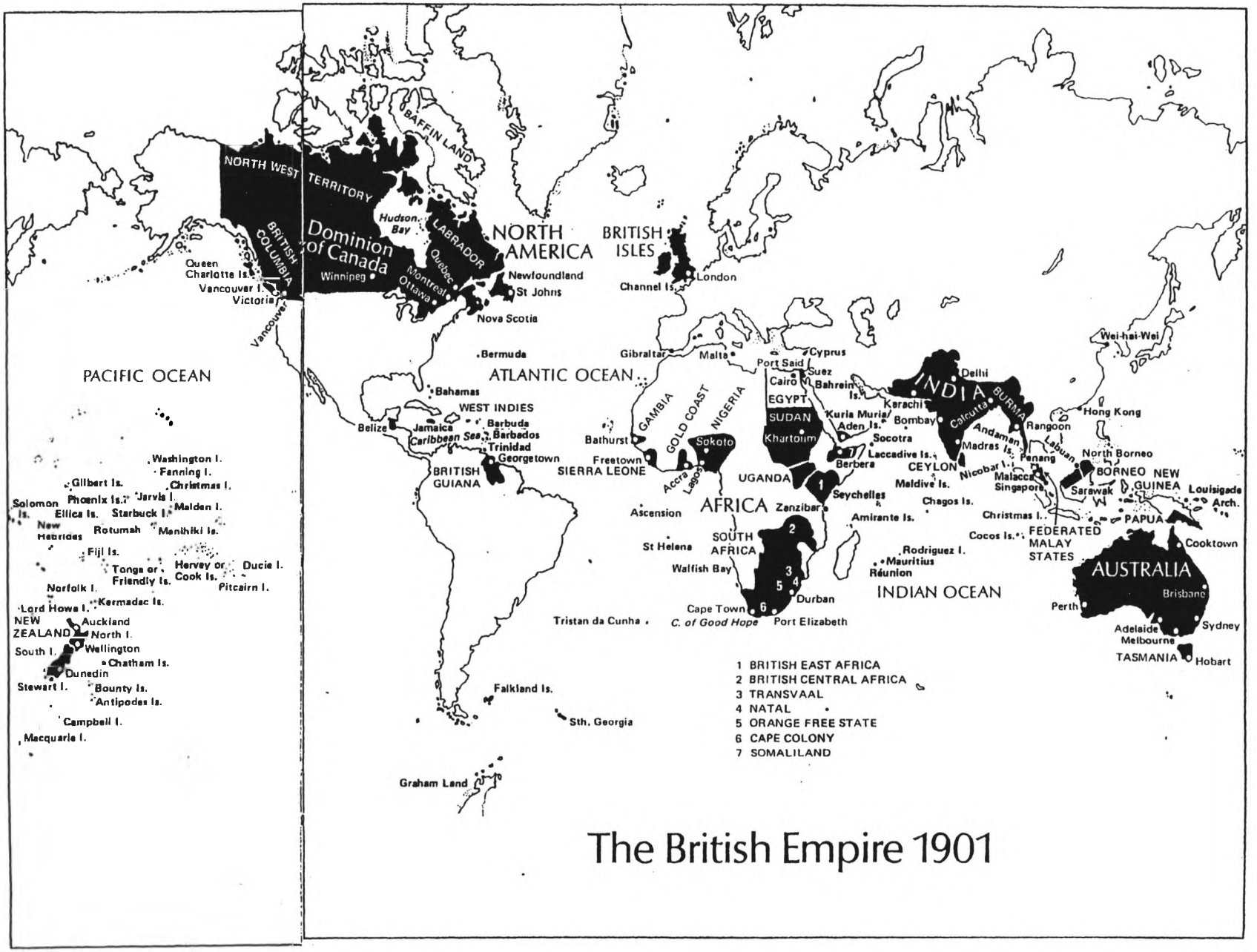


The British Empire 1901

Gustave Doré. *Ludgate Hill*, from *London: A Pilgrimage*, 1872.

from Henderson, Heather & Wm. Sharpe, eds. The Longman Anthology of British Literature: The Victorian Age. NY: Longman, 1999.

The Victorian Age

1832–1901

> Never since the beginning of Time was there, that we hear or read of, so intensely self-conscious a Society. Our whole relations to the Universe and to our fellow-man have become an Inquiry, a Doubt.
>
> —*Thomas Carlyle, 1831*

Nothing characterizes Victorian society so much as its quest for self-definition. The sixty-three years of Victoria's reign were marked by momentous and intimidating social changes, startling inventions, prodigious energies; the rapid succession of events produced wild prosperity and unthinkable poverty, humane reforms and flagrant exploitation, immense ambitions and devastating doubts. Between 1800 and 1850 the population doubled from nine to eighteen million, and Britain became the richest country on earth, the first urban, industrial society in history. For some, it was a period of great achievement, deep faith, indisputable progress. For others, it was "an age of destruction," religious collapse, vicious profiteering. To almost everyone it was apparent that, as Sir Henry Holland put it in 1858, "we are living in *an age of transition*."

But what Matthew Arnold called the "multitudinousness" of British culture overwhelmed all efforts to give the era a collective identity or a clear sense of purpose. Dazzled and dazed by their steam-powered printing presses, their railways and telegraphs, journalism and junk mail, Victorians suffered from both future shock and the information explosion. For the first time a nation had become self-consciously modern: people were sure only of their differences from previous generations, certain only that traditional ways of life were fast being transformed into something perilously unstable and astonishingly new. As the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray noted, "We are of the time of chivalry. . . . We are of the age of steam."

Victoria and the Victorians

In an unpredictable, tumultuous era, the stern, staid figure of Queen Victoria came to represent stability and continuity. The adjective "Victorian" was first used in 1851 to celebrate the nation's mounting pride in its institutions and commercial success. That year, the global predominance of British industry had emerged incontestably at the original "world's fair" in London, the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations," which Prince Albert helped organize. Arrayed for the world to see in a vast "Crystal Palace" of iron and glass, the marvels of British manufacture achieved a regal stature of their own and cast their allure upon the monarchy in turn. In the congratulatory rhetoric that surrounded the event, the conservative, retiring queen emerged as the durable symbol of her dynamic, aggressively businesslike realm.

Sunlight Soap advertisement commemorating the 1897 Jubilee of Victoria's reign.

In succeeding decades, the official portraits of Queen Victoria, gradually aging, reflected her country's sense of its own maturation as a society and world power. Etched by conflict with her prime ministers, the birth of nine children, and the early death of her beloved Prince Albert, Victoria's once pretty face became deeply lined and heavily jowled. Represented as a fairytale teenaged queen at her coronation in 1837, she radiated a youthful enthusiasm that corresponded to the optimism of the earlier 1830s. It seemed a decade of new beginnings. Settling into the role of fertile matron-monarch, she offered a domestic image to match the booming productivity of the 1850s. Reclusive after Albert died in 1861, she eventually took on the austere role of the black-satined Empress of India, projecting a world-weary glumness that lent gravity to the imperial heyday of the 1870s. Finally, as the aged, venerated Widow of Windsor, she became a universal icon, prompting the nostalgic worldwide spectacles of the Golden and Diamond Jubilees in 1887 and 1897. When Victoria died in 1901, after the longest reign in English history, a newspaper wrote: "Few of us, perhaps, have realized till now how large a part she had in the life of everyone of us; how the thread of her life [bound] the warp of the nation's progress."

During the seven decades of her rule, Victoria's calm profile, stamped on currency and displayed in offices and outposts from London to Bombay, presided over the expansion of Britain into the world's greatest empire. Economically and politically, Britannia ruled not only the waves but more than a quarter of the globe's landmass. Among its domains were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Indian subcontinent and Ceylon, Malaya, Hong Kong, Singapore, Burma, Jamaica, Trinidad,

British Guiana, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Rhodesia, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria. By the 1890s one out of every four people on earth was a "subject" of Queen Victoria.

Victoria stood not only for England and Empire, but also for Duty, Family, and, especially, Propriety. "We have come to regard the Crown as the head of our morality" wrote the historian Walter Bagehot. As a description of behavior, "Victorian" signifies social conduct governed by strict rules, formal manners, and rigidly defined gender roles. Relations between the sexes were hedged about with sexual prudery and an intense concern for maintaining the appearance of propriety in public, whatever the private facts. But although she was presented as the ultimate role model, Victoria herself could not escape the contradictions of her era. The most powerful woman on earth, she denounced "this mad, wicked folly of Women's Rights." Her quiet reserve restored the dignity of the monarchy after the rakish ways of George IV, but she allowed advertisers to trade shamelessly on her image and product endorsements. Her face was universally known, featured on everything from postage stamps to tea trays, yet after Albert's death she lived in seclusion, rarely seeing either her ministers or the public. An icon of motherhood, she detested pregnancy, childbirth, and babies. As an emblem of Britain's greatness, Queen Victoria gave her subjects the public identity and purpose that privately they—and she, in her diaries—recognized as an unfulfilled ideal.

The Victorians have left us a contradictory picture of themselves. On the one hand, they were phenomenally energetic, dedicated to the Gospel of Work and driven by a solemn sense of duty to the Public Good. Popular authors like Dickens and Trollope churned out three-volume novels, engaged in numerous philanthropic projects, devoured twelve-course dinners, took twenty-mile walks, and produced a voluminous correspondence. Explorers and missionaries such as Burton, Speke, Stanley, and Livingston took enormous risks to map uncharted territory or spread Christianity "in darkest Africa." Although an invalid, Florence Nightingale revamped the entire British military medical and supply system from her bedroom office. All this activity was sustained by belief in its implicit moral benefit. In matters of character Victorians prized respectability, earnestness, a sense of duty and public service; most would have regarded an industrious, pious conventionality as the best road not only to material recompense but to heavenly rewards as well.

Yet the fabled self-confidence of this overachieving society often rings hollow. Their literature conveys an uneasy sense that their obsession with work was in part a deliberate distraction, as if Victorians were discharging public responsibilities in order to ease nagging doubts about their religious faith, about changing gender roles, about the moral quandaries of class privilege and imperial rule. Much of the era's social conservatism, such as its resistance to women's rights and to class mobility, may be traced to the fear of change. They struggled to dominate the present moment in order to keep an uncertain future at bay. Few questioned that tremendous advances were taking place in science, public health, transportation, and the general standard of living, but each new idea or discovery seemed to have unexpected, distressing repercussions.

The critic J. A. Froude remarked in 1841 that "the very truths which have come forth have produced doubts . . . this dazzle has too often ended in darkness." Discoveries in geology, biology, and textual scholarship shattered belief in the literal truth of the Bible. The Industrial Revolution shifted power from the landed aristocracy toward an insecure, expanding middle class of businessmen and professionals, impoverishing millions of once-rural laborers along the way. Strident, riotous campaigns to

extend voting rights to males of the middle and working classes produced fears of armed insurrection. Coupled with the agitations for and against trade unions, women's equality, socialism, and the separation of church and state, the fitful transformation of Britain's political and economic structure often teetered on the brink of open class warfare. In the national clamor for reform, every sector of the population fought for its privileges and feared for its rights. The following pages introduce the Victorian period by looking at several key issues: the era's energy and invention, its doubts about religion and industrialism, its far-reaching social reforms, its conflicted fascination with Empire, the commercialization and expansion of the reading public, and the period's vigorous self-scrutiny in the mirror of literature.

The Age of Energy and Invention

> The most salient characteristic of life in this latter portion of the 19th century is its SPEED.
>
> —*W. R. Greg, Life at High Pressure, 1875*

The "newness" of Victorian society—its speed, progress, and triumphant ingenuity—was epitomized by the coming of the railway. Until the 1830s, the fastest ways to travel or transport goods were still the most ancient ones, by sail or horse. But on seeing the first train pass through the Rugby countryside in 1839, Thomas Arnold astutely remarked: "Feudality is gone forever." The earliest passenger railway line opened in 1830 between Liverpool and Manchester; by 1855, eight thousand miles of track had been laid. Speeds of fifty miles per hour were soon routine; the journey from London to Edinburgh that had taken two weeks in 1800 now took less than a day.

Carrying passengers, freight, newspapers, and mail, the railways helped create a national consciousness by linking once-remote parts of the country into a single economy and culture. Networks of information, distribution, and services moved news, goods, and people from one end of Britain to the other to the rhythm of the railway timetable. The accelerating pace of life that railways introduced became one of the defining features of the age.

Moreover, the railway irrevocably altered the face of the landscape. Its bridges, tunnels, cuttings, crossings, viaducts, and embankments permanently scarred a rural landscape whose fields, hedgerows, and highways were rooted deep in history. In the cities, engineers and entrepreneurs carved room for vast railyards and stations by demolishing populous districts. Discharging commodities and crowds, the railways transformed town centers everywhere, bolstering local economies and stimulating construction as they arrived, but depriving once-thriving coaching inns and former mail routes of traffic and trade. Underground trains restructured the experience of travel within the city as well: the world's first subway line opened in 1863 in London; a complete inner London system was operating by 1884. Finally, railway-sponsored mass tourism eroded the regional distinctiveness and insularity of individual places. The inventor of the organized excursion, Thomas Cook, saw his advertising slogan, "RAILWAYS FOR THE MILLIONS," turned into a simple statement of fact.

Optimistic social prophets envisioned all classes reaping the fruits of the Industrial Revolution. The widespread Victorian belief in Progress was sustained by many factors, including rising incomes, the greater availability of goods, the perception of surplus production, and the leading role of Britain in world affairs. Many people were

Robert Howlett. *Portrait of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Launching Chains of the Great Eastern*, 1857. Howlett's interest in contemporary subjects, ranging from steamships and Crimean War heroes to telescopic views of the moon, exemplified the belief that as a new medium itself, photography was supremely suited to capture "progress" in all its manifestations. In his portrait of Brunel, the audacious engineer who designed the Great Western Railway and the world's largest steamship, *The Great Eastern*, Howlett evoked both industrial might and Victorian self-confidence; the man of genius dominates the chains that dwarf him.

awed by the sheer size of industrial achievement: the heaviest ships, the longest tunnels, the biggest warehouses, the most massive factory outputs ever known all contributed to a sublimity of scale that staggered the public's imagination.

Every decade brought impressive innovations that transformed the rhythms of everyday life. The first regular Atlantic steamship crossings began in 1838, flouting the age-old dependence on wind and tide, importing tea from China, cotton from India or Alabama, beef from Australia, and exporting to world markets finished goods ranging from Sheffield cutlery and Manchester textiles to Pear's Soap and the latest Dickens novel.

Equally momentous in its own way was Henry Fox Talbot's discovery between 1839 and 1841 of how to produce and print a photographic negative. The technology of his "sun-pictures" revolutionized the entire visual culture and changed the human relationship to the past. A moment in time could now be "fixed" forever. Thus, more than a century later, we have photographic records of many subsequent innovations: the construction of the London sewer system; the laying of the transatlantic cable in 1865, putting London and New York in almost instantaneous contact via telegraph; the popularity in the 1890s of bicycles, gramophones, electric trams, and the first regular motion picture shows; and in the year of Victoria's death, 1901, Marconi's first transatlantic wireless radio message.

Capturing the public mood, Disraeli wrote in 1862: "It is a privilege to live in this age of rapid and brilliant events. What an error to consider it a utilitarian age. It

is one of infinite romance." For the growing middle class there was an Aladdin-like sense of wonderment at the astounding abundance of *things:* an incredible hodgepodge of inventions, gimmicks, and gadgets began to make up the familiar paraphernalia of modern life, including chain stores, washing and sewing machines, postage stamps, canned foods, toothpaste, sidewalk newsstands, illustrated magazines and newspapers, typewriters, breakfast cereal, slide projectors, skin creams, diet pills, shampoo, ready-to-wear clothes, sneakers (called "plimsolls"), and even a cumbersome prototype computer, designed by Charles Babbage.

Victorian architecture, interior design, and clothing embodied the obsession with plenitude, presenting a bewildering variety of prefabricated, highly ornamented styles. A house might feature Gothic revival, neoclassical, Egyptian, Moorish, baronial, or Arts-and-Crafts motifs, every inch of its interior covered with wallpapers, etchings, draperies, carvings, lacework, and knickknacks. Though fashions varied, men and women were usually as well upholstered as their furniture, tightly buttoned from top to toe in sturdy fabrics, their clothes complexly layered on the outside (men's waistcoats, jackets, cravats, and watches) and inside (women's crinolines, petticoats, bustles, corsets, and drawers).

In a Protestant culture that linked industriousness with godliness, both capitalism and consumerism were fueled by prevailing religious attitudes. For Thomas Carlyle, work itself had a divine sanction: "Produce! Produce!" he wrote in *Sartor Resartus:* "Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name!" His compatriots obliged: by 1848 Britain's output of cotton cloth and iron was more than half of the world total, and the coal output two-thirds of world production. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, when Britain was dubbed "the workshop of the world," the display struck the Reverend Charles Kingsley as triumphant evidence of God's will: "If these forefathers of ours could rise from their graves this day they would be inclined to see in our hospitals, in our railroads, in the achievements of our physical science . . . proofs of the kingdom of God . . . vaster than any of which they had dreamed."

But for Karl Marx, laboring to write *Das Kapital* (1867) at a desk in the British Museum Reading Room, it was not enough to find God in the material world. He saw that through the hoopla of the marketplace, products had acquired a "mystical character" and "theological niceties" of their own. Yet Marx did not regard commodities as proof of God's existence; instead, he argued that they functioned as deities in their own right. An ignored subversive stationed at the heart of the empire, Marx perceived how status-filled objects seemed to take on lives that defined human social relations, even as they degraded the workers that produced them. Looking around at the wonders of British industry, Marx decided that people had become, finally, less important than things. For him, it was the Age of Commodity Fetishism.

The Age of Doubt

> It was the age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiplied doubts and shaken beliefs.
>
> —*John Morley*

Despite their reverence for material accomplishment and the tenets of organized religion, the Victorians were deeply conflicted in their beliefs and intentions. In retrospect, the forces that shook the foundations of Victorian society might be summed up in two names, Marx and Darwin: though he was virtually unknown at the time, Marx's radical critique of unbridled free enterprise brought to the most acute level contemporary analyses of economic injustice and the class system. Darwin's staggering evolutionary theories implied that biblical accounts of creation could not be literally true. But well before either had published a word, British thought was in crisis: "The Old has passed away," wrote Carlyle in 1831, "but, alas, the New appears not in its stead." In his 1851 novel *Yeast,* Charles Kingsley described how deluged the Victorians felt by challenges to their faith and social order: "The various stereotyped systems . . . received by tradition [are] breaking up under them like ice in a thaw," he wrote; "a thousand facts and notions, which they know not how to classify, [are] pouring in on them like a flood."

The Crisis of Faith

In the midst of this tumult, the Victorians were troubled by Time. On the one hand, there was not enough of it: the accelerated pace of change kept people too busy to assimilate the torrent of new ideas and technologies. In the 1880s the essayist F. R. Harrison contended that Victorians were experiencing "a life lived so full . . . that we have no time to reflect where we have been and whither we intend to go." On the other hand, there was too much time: well before Darwin, scientists were showing that vast eons of geological and cosmic development had preceded human history, itself suddenly lengthening due to such discoveries as the Neanderthal skeletons found in 1856.

Their sense of worth diminished by both time clocks and time lines, Victorians felt they had little opportunity for reflection and often took scant comfort in it. Matthew Arnold complained of "this strange disease of modern life with its sick hurry, its divided aims." Yet this climate of anxious uncertainty provoked intense religious fervor, and debates about church doctrine and the proper forms of Christian worship occupied the national consciousness throughout the century. "This is the age of experiment," wrote the historian E. P. Hood in 1850, regarding the constant testing of belief, "but the cheerful fact is, that almost all men are yearning after a faith."

The most influential group were the "Evangelicals," a term which covers not only "dissenting" or "nonconformist" Protestant sects outside the Church of England (such as Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists), but also the Evangelical party or "Low Church" faction within the Church of England. Anti-Catholic, Bible-oriented, concerned with humanitarian issues, and focused on the salvation of individual souls within a rigid framework of Christian conduct, Evangelicalism dominated the religious and often the social life of working- and middle-class Britons. Evangelicals practiced self-denial and frugality; they rejected most forms of entertainment as sinful or frivolous, and regarded any but the simplest church service as a "popish" throwback to Catholicism, which they abhorred on nationalistic as well as religious grounds. It was Evangelicalism that was largely responsible for the freeing of slaves in the British colonies in 1833, for the strictness of Victorian morality at home, and for British missionary zeal abroad.

At the other end of the spectrum were the Anglo-Catholics of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, which flourished in the 1830s and 1840s. Through an appeal to early church history, they sought to revitalize the power and spiritual intensity of the Church of England, insisting on the authority of the Church hierarchy, and reaffirming the Church's traditional position as a grace-granting intermediary between

Christians and their God. The movement collapsed when its leader, John Henry Newman, converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845. But the antirational, romantic spirit of this small group left a substantial legacy in the renewed ritualism of "High Church" practices. Gothic revival architecture, the burning of altar candles and incense, the resplendent vestments of the clergy—all these were aspects of a religious apprehension of sensuous beauty and mysticism that had not been seen in England since before the Reformation. This "High Church" aestheticism came into direct and ongoing conflict with "Low Church" sobriety.

The crisis of religious doubt occasioned by biblical scholarship and scientific discoveries hit Christian belief hard. But it prompted an array of coping strategies and new ideas about the position of human beings in the universe that remain significant to this day. Most Victorian authors and intellectuals found a way to reassert religious ideas. Thus George Eliot, for instance, maintained that an Evangelical sense of duty and ethics was essential as a social "glue" to prevent the disintegration of society in the absence of religious authority. That it was still an era which *wanted* to believe is evident from the huge success of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), in which the poet's hard-won religious faith finally triumphs over science-induced despair. Extending evolutionary theory to spiritual advantage, Tennyson hoped man might transcend animality by encouraging his divine soul to "Move upward, working out the beast, / And let the ape and tiger die." Even Darwin's defender Thomas Huxley, who coined the word "agnostic," also celebrated Auguste Comte's positivism and "the Religion of Humanity." Huxley spoke for many who had renounced organized religion but not spiritual impulses when he said that Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* "led me to know that a deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology." Finally, some artists and writers used Christian icons as an avant-garde protest against the secular direction of modern life. "The more materialistic science becomes," said the artist Edward Burne-Jones, "the more angels shall I paint."

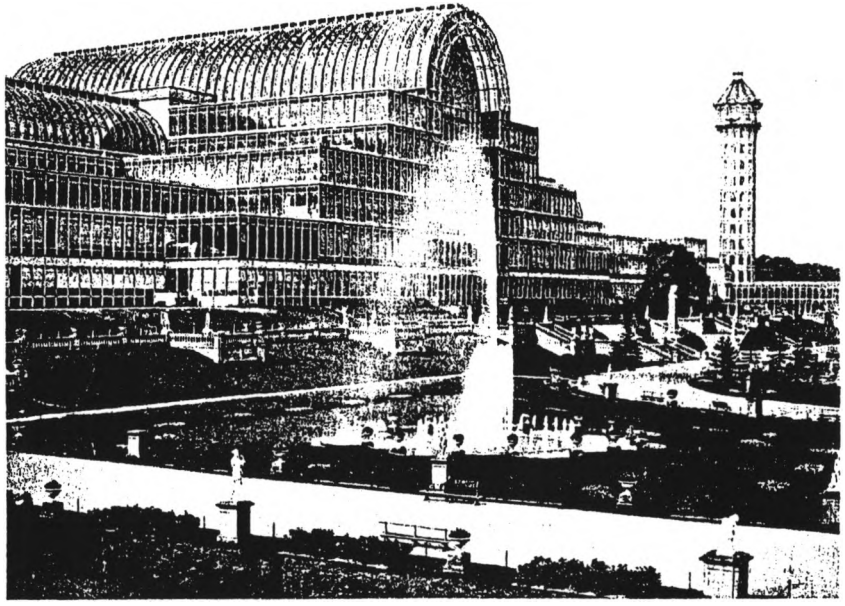
The Industrial Catastrophe

In principle, the Victorian crisis of faith should at least have pleased the Utilitarians. The creed of these atheistic, rationalist followers of Jeremy Bentham was strictly practical: measure all human endeavor by its ability to produce "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." Sharing a committed, "can do" philosophy of social reform, Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism were the two dominant ideologies shaping early and mid-Victorian life. But despite the significant changes they effected in government and education during the 1820s and 1830s, even the Utilitarians ran out of self-assurance and moral steam in the morass of mid-Victorian cultural ferment.

A few energetic idealists dreamed of leveling age-old inequalities. "Glory to Man in the highest!" wrote Swinburne in 1869, "for Man is the master of things." But here too a form of evolutionary theory was undercutting the conventional pieties of social discourse. "Love thy neighbor" had no more moral authority for the "Social Darwinist" than it had historical accuracy for the textual scholar. Summed up in the phrase "survival of the fittest"—coined by the philosopher Herbert Spencer in 1852, seven years before *The Origin of Species* appeared—Social Darwinism viewed as dangerous any attempt to regulate the supposedly immutable laws of society. Evolutionary forces decreed that only the fittest should survive in capitalist competition as well as in nature. Applied to nations and races as well as individuals, this theory supported the apparent destiny of England to prosper and rule the world.

Social Darwinism was a brutal offshoot of the influential economic theory of laissez-faire capitalism. Drawing on Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), businessmen argued that the unfettered pursuit of self-interest, in the form of unrestricted competition in a free market, would be best for society. This was an idea that Utilitarians and many Evangelicals rejected in favor of legislative regulation, since their view of the imperfections of humanity indicated that one person's self-interest was likely to mean another's exploitation. The desperate need to protect the poor and disadvantaged, and the difficulty of doing so, was cause for much soul-searching, particularly among those who had made a religion of social reform.

Concern about the fairness and efficacy of the social structure was exacerbated by the unprecedented rate of urbanization. "Our age is preeminently the age of great cities" declared historian Robert Vaughan in 1843. At the beginning of the nineteenth century only one-fifth of the British population lived in cities; by the end of the century, more than three-quarters did. Such vast numbers of people crowding into the cities created hideous problems of housing, sanitation, and disease. For the poor, living and working conditions were appalling, particularly in the 1830s and 1840s when neither housing nor factories were regulated. Industrial workers labored six days a week, for as many as fourteen or sixteen hours a day, in stifling, deafening, dangerous workshops, then went home to unheated rooms they often shared with other families, six or seven people to a bed of rags. Drinking water often came from rivers filled with industrial pollution and human waste. Without job security, healthcare, or pensions, the injured, the sick, and the aged fell by the wayside. In manufacturing cities the competition for survival was indeed intense: the life expectancy among working people in Manchester in 1841 was about twenty years.



Joseph Paxton. The Crystal Palace, site of the Great Exhibition of 1851, after its re-erection at Sydenham, c. 1855.

Foreign visitors in particular were struck with wonder and horror at the conjunction of so much misery and so much wealth. "From this filthy sewer pure gold flows," marveled the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville: "From this foul drain the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilize the whole world." Friedrich Engels spent a year in Manchester, producing the most detailed and shocking firsthand account of Victorian industrial life, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. Karl Marx, who lived in England for thirty-four years, worked his observations into his famous theory of "surplus labor value." Under the current system, he said, wretched factory hands would never receive adequate payment for the wealth they created by transforming raw materials into precious commodities. Like many people at the time, both liberal and conservative, Marx expected that violent class warfare was imminent.

On average real wages went up and prices went down in Victoria's reign, with per capita income doubling between 1800 and 1860. But the boom-and-bust cycles of free trade made for unsteady wages, seesaw prices, sudden layoffs, and volatile labor relations, as Britain made a lurching transition to an industrial and commercial economy. There were serious depressions or slowdowns almost every decade, but the worst took place during "the Hungry Forties." Scarce food, widespread unemployment, and general despair provoked riots and fears of revolution. The statesman Charles Greville noted in his diary in 1842, "There is an immense and continually increasing population, no adequate demand for labor . . . no confidence, but a universal alarm, disquietude, and discontent." An American observer of the industrial scene named Henry Coleman remarked, "Every day that I live I thank Heaven that I am not a poor man with a family in England." When the economy recovered, many fled. Between the years 1850 and 1880, three million emigrants left Britain, two-thirds for the United States.

The Age of Reform

> The whole meaning of Victorian England is lost if it is thought of as a country of stuffy complacency and black top-hatted moral priggery. Its frowsty crinolines and dingy hansom cabs, its gas-lit houses and over-ornate draperies, concealed a people engaged in a tremendously exciting adventure—the daring experiment of fitting industrial man into a democratic society.
>
> —*Historian David Thompson, 1950*

Despite crushing problems and the threat of social breakdown, the Victorian period can justly be called an age of reform. Each of the issues that threatened to bring the country into open conflict or destroy the social fabric was in the course of the century addressed peacefully through legislation: voting rights were extended, working conditions improved, and women's rights began to gain ground, without the bloody revolutions or insurrections that struck France in 1838, 1848, and 1870, and Germany in 1848. As fears of revolution receded, the subtler worries of Mill and Arnold, based on their observation of American democracy, seemed more to the point. How could liberty of thought be preserved in a mass culture dedicated to majority rule? How could the best ideas elevate, rather than succumb to, the lowest common denominator?

Politics and Class

The key to the century's relatively peaceful progress was the passage of legislation for political and social reform. The start of the Victorian era is often dated 1832, five years before Victoria's coronation, because in that year the First Reform Bill was enacted. It gave representation to the new industrial towns, such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, all cities of over 100,000 inhabitants that had lacked a single seat in Parliament. It also enlarged the electorate by about 50 percent, granting the vote to some propertied portions of the middle class. Still, only one in six adult males could vote, and the aristocracy retained parliamentary control. Agitation for reform continued, especially in the Chartist movement of 1838–1848. Taking its name from the People's Charter of 1838, it was a loose alliance of artisans and factory workers that called for sweeping reforms, including universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, equal electoral districts, and annual elections. Chartism was the world's first independent working-class movement, its membership swelling into the millions during the depressions of the 1840s. The Chartists presented giant petitions, signed by one to five million people, to Parliament in 1839, 1842, and 1848. But each time they were rejected, and the movement collapsed after a government show of force effectively defused the demonstrations accompanying the petition of 1848.

The lot of workers was to improve piecemeal, not through the grand political reorganization envisioned by Chartism, as Parliament grudgingly passed acts regulating food, factories, and the right to unionize. An important breakthrough came with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The laws levied tariffs on the importation of foreign grain; they were sponsored by the landed aristocracy to protect the high price of their home-grown grains (called "corn" in Britain). Therefore, as the poet Thomas Hood wrote in 1842, "bread was dear and flesh and blood were cheap." The new urban business interests fought the protectionist tariffs in the name of "Free Trade." They preferred a stable, better-fed workforce to one that rioted or starved in times of scarcity, but they also wanted cheap bread to keep their workers' wages down. Later, the Public Health acts of 1848 and 1869 improved the availability of tea, sugar, and beer. In the 1870s the importation of wheat from the United States and refrigerated beef and fruit from Australia and New Zealand meant that the new custom of having large bacon-and-egg breakfasts could be observed even by the working classes.

Beginning in 1833, a crucial series of Factory Acts slowly curtailed the horrors of industrial labor. The 1833 Act provided for safety inspections of machinery, prohibited the employment of children under nine, and limited the work week to forty-eight hours for children under twelve. Though the law was poorly enforced, a trend had begun. The Ten Hours Act of 1847 limited the time women and children could work daily in textile factories, and ensuing acts gradually regulated safety and working conditions in other industries. Workers' political power increased when the Second Reform Bill (1867) doubled the electorate, including all male urban householders. During this period employers also felt increasing pressure from extra-legal trade union movements, including miners, textile workers, and women garment workers. An uncomprehending middle class (including Dickens and Gaskell) often regarded unionists as anarchists and murderers. But trade unions were finally legalized in 1871, and the first working-class Members of Parliament were unionist miners elected in 1874. By the 1890s there were 1.5 million trade union members, many of them part of the growing Socialist movement, and the foundations of the modern Labour Party had been laid.

Thus the high hopes of Chartism had in a sense succeeded, many of its supposedly dangerous demands eventually met. As Engels noted, these changes also benefited the middle class who resisted them, as people realized the value—social as well as economic—of reduced hostilities and improved cooperation between classes. Everyone also gained from related reforms that reflected weakening class barriers and increasing social mobility. In 1870 the Education Act initiated nationally funded public education in England and Wales. In the 1880s, middle-class investigators and social workers spearheaded the "discovery of poverty" in London's East End, one of a range of efforts that brought better housing, nutrition, and education to the poor. Finally, the nation as a whole benefited from what historian Asa Briggs has called "the one great political invention in Victorian England"—a civil service staffed through open examinations rather than patronage.

By the last decades of the century, Britain had become a more democratic and pluralistic society; it enjoyed greater freedom in matters of religion, political views, and intellectual life than any other country. Overall, the middle class were the chief generators and beneficiaries of social change. Outsiders before 1832, they became key players in the Victorian period. Though they never dominated politics, which remained largely an aristocratic preserve, they set the tone and agenda for the era's socioeconomic evolution.

"The Woman Question"

Still, one group found almost all doors closed against it. Throughout much of Victoria's reign, women had few opportunities for higher education or satisfying employment: from scullery maids to governesses, female workers of all ranks were severely exploited, and prior to the 1870s married women had no legal rights. What contemporaries called "the Woman Question" was hotly debated in every decade, but only at the end of the century were the first women allowed to vote in local elections. Full female suffrage came only after World War I. Despite articulate champions such as Harriet Martineau and John Stuart Mill, and the examples of successful women such as George Eliot, the Brontës, Florence Nightingale, and the Queen herself, proponents of women's rights made slow headway against prevailing norms. Victorians were quick to note that theirs was the first era in which women writers achieved literary prominence, producing works widely recognized to be equal in stature to those by men. But many regarded this "brain-work" as a serious aberration that unfitted women for motherhood. The medical establishment backed the conventional view that women were physically and intellectually inferior, a "weaker sex" that would buckle under the weight of strong passion, serious thought, or vigorous exercise. Only in their much-vaunted "femininity" did women have an edge, as nurturers of children and men's better instincts.

The ideal Victorian woman was supposed to be domestic and pure, selflessly motivated by the desire to serve others rather than fulfill her own needs. In particular, her duty was to soothe the savage beast her husband might become as he fought in the jungle of free trade. Her role prescribed by Coventry Patmore's wildly popular poem, *The Angel in the House* (1854–1862), the model woman would provide her family with an uplifting refuge from the moral squalor of the working world. Only a small portion of the nation's women could afford to remain at home, but the constant celebration of

home and hearth by politicians, the press, and respected authors made conspicuous domesticity the expected role for well-born and well-married women. Many upper- and middle-class women spent their days paying social calls or acquiring "female accomplishments" such as needlework, sketching, or flower-arranging. Though this leisure played an important part in generating new literary markets targeted at women, it provoked devastating satires of time-wasting females by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, and Florence Nightingale, among others. By the 1860s, with the birth of the department store and modern advertising, leisured women were also for the first time wooed as consumers and portrayed as smart shoppers.

Though their contribution was minimized, women were in fact heavily involved in the labor force, making up one-third of all workers, and 90 percent of the nation's largest labor category, household servants. For so-called "redundant" women who could not find husbands or work, the situation was especially grim. Low wages and unemployment drove tens of thousands of girls and women into prostitution, which, due to the growth of the military and repressive Victorian sexual mores, became one more "boom industry" whose workers reaped few rewards.

If a woman's life was economically precarious outside marriage, her existence was legally terminated within that bond. A woman lost the few civil rights she had as she became "one body" with her husband. Married women had, at the start of the era, no legal right to custody of their own children or to own property. The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 established a civil divorce court in London, and subsequent acts created protection against assault, desertion, and cruelty, but only a wealthy few could afford legal proceedings. The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, however, gave women the right to possess wages they earned after marriage, as well as any property they owned before it.

Gradually, with the aid of male allies, women created educational opportunities for themselves. The first women's college opened in London in 1848, and the first women's colleges opened at Cambridge in 1869 and at Oxford in 1879—though women were not allowed to take Oxbridge degrees. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman M.D., became an accredited physician both in Britain and the United States in 1859; by 1895 there were 264 women doctors. In the 1890s, the much-parodied image of the liberated "New Woman" began circulating in the press. By then many young women were braving a conservative backlash to take new positions in office work, the civil service, nursing, and teaching. They also enjoyed the social freedom that accompanied their expanding role in the economy. The novelist Walter Besant wrote admiringly in 1897 of the "personal independence that is the keynote of the situation. . . . The girls go off by themselves on their bicycles; they go about as they please. . . . For the first time in man's history it is regarded as a right and proper thing to trust a girl as a boy insists on being trusted."

The uphill battle that feminists faced is conveyed in the cautious motto of a national-market periodical for women. Published from 1890 to 1912, *Woman* magazine declared its mission: "Forward, but not too fast." Antisuffragists of both sexes found willing allies among those who regarded women as weak and unworldly, better equipped for housekeeping than speechmaking. As the nineteenth century waned, many women and most men would still have endorsed Dickens's parodic view of the public woman, Mrs Jellyby in *Bleak House:* she is so focused on missionary work in Africa that she cannot see the lamentable state of her family in the very next room.

The Age of Empire

> I contend that we are the first race in the world, and the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race.
>
> —*Cecil Rhodes*

With the prime meridian conveniently located at Greenwich, just southeast of London, Victorians could measure all the world in relation to a British focal point, culturally as well as geographically. Abroad, as at home, it was an Englishman's duty to rule whatever childlike or womanly peoples he came across, for their own good. For Queen Victoria, the mission of empire was obvious: "to protect the poor natives and advance civilization." The conviction of innate superiority was reinforced by the implacable desire of British business to dominate world markets. The vast size of Britain's naval and commercial fleets and its head start in industrial production helped the cause, and Britain's military and commercial might was unsurpassed. Victorian advertising reveals the global realities and hopes of the emerging merchant empires. Tetley's tea ads depicted their plantations in Ceylon, as well as the ships, trains, and turbanned laborers that secured "the largest sale in the world." Pear's Soap advertising campaigns kept up with British expeditionary forces worldwide, finding potential customers in temporary adversaries such as the "Fuzzy-Wuzzies" of the Sudanese wars, or the Boers of South Africa. One advertiser even challenged convention by speaking of "Brightest Africa"—because of the continent's vast market potential.

Yet the empire was hard to assemble and expensive—monetarily and morally—to maintain. Slavery was abolished in British dominions in 1833, but many fortunes still depended on the cheap production of sugar at West Indian plantations, as well as slave-produced cotton from the United States. Thus British implication in the slave trade remained a volatile issue. All Britain took sides in the Governor Eyre scandal of 1865, when the acting governor of Jamaica imposed severe martial law to put down a rebellion by plantation workers. Carlyle, Dickens, and Ruskin supported the executions and floggings, while John Stuart Mill sought to have Eyre tried for murder.

Closer to home, the perennial "Irish Question" resurfaced urgently during the potato famine of 1845–1847. Through the British government's callousness and ineptitude, a million and a half Irish died of starvation and disease and an equal number emigrated. In the wake of this disaster, the Irish engaged in rebellions, uprisings, and massive political efforts to gain parliamentary "Home Rule" for Ireland. But concern about the unity of the Empire, the safety of Protestants in the north of Ireland, and the supposed inability of the Irish to govern themselves led Parliament to defeat all efforts at Irish autonomy during Victoria's reign.

The Asian empire captured the popular imagination for the first time through the so-called "Indian Mutiny" of 1857–1859, a broad-based rebellion against the East India Company, the commercial entity that ruled most of India. The gory details of Indian atrocities, followed by equally bloody and more extensive British reprisals, filled the press and inflamed the public. The crown now took possession, and henceforth British policy was much more guarded, attempting to respect local institutions and practices. Later, as Rudyard Kipling recorded in his novel *Kim* (1901), India became an important setting for the "Great Game" of espionage to prevent foreign destabilization of British interests worldwide.

PEARS' SOAP IN THE SOUDAN.

"Even if our invasion of the Soudan has done nothing else it has at any rate left the Arab something to puzzle his fuzzy head over, for the legend PEARS' SOAP IS THE BEST, scrubbed in huge white characters on the rock which marks the farthest point of our advance towards Berber, will tax all the wits of the Dervishes of the Desert to translate."—Phil Robinson, *War Correspondent in the Soudan) of the Daily Telegraph in London*, 1884.

"The Formula of British Conquest." Pears' Soap advertisement from *Illustrated London News*, 27 August 1887. *Source*: Harvard College Library.

In the second half of the century, frequent and often bungled conflicts riveted public attention. The Crimean War of 1854–1856, in which Britain fought on the side of Turkey to prevent Russian expansion in the Middle East, cost 21,000 British lives but made little change in the European balance of power. "Some one had blunder'd," as Tennyson wrote in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The newspapers' exposure of the gross mismanagement of the war effort, however, led to improved supply systems, medical care, and weapons, and the rebuilding of the armed forces, all of which served Britain in ensuing colonial wars. A veteran of the Crimea, General George Gordon, rose to fame in 1860, capturing Peking and protecting far-flung Britons in the Second Opium War. But in 1884 he and several thousand others were massacred at Khartoum in the Sudan after a year's siege by religiously inspired rebels. Governmental dithering caused the British relief force to arrive two days too late. On another front, the Boer War of 1899–1902 stimulated war mania at home but tarnished Britain's image throughout the world. In pursuit of freer access to South African gold and diamond mines, the world's greatest military power bogged down in a guerilla war that ended only when British forces herded Afrikaner civilians into concentration camps, where 20,000 died.

Many viewed these conflicts as part of "the White Man's burden," as Kipling phrased it: the duty to spread British order and culture throughout the world. Yet imperialism had many opponents. In 1877 the Liberal leader William Gladstone argued that the Empire was a drain on the economy and population, serving only "to compromise British character in the judgment of the impartial world." Even Queen Victoria complained of the "overbearing and offensive behavior" of the Indian Civil Service for "trying to trample on the people and continually reminding them and making them feel that they are a conquered people." Like the growth of Victorian cities, the unplanned agglomeration of British colonies involved such a haphazard mixture of economic expansion, high-minded sentiment, crass exploitation, political expediency, and blatant racism that it apparently had no clear rationale. "We seem," said Cambridge historian J. R. Seeley in 1883, "to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."

Victorians did not only go to the ends of the earth; they saw the world's abundance come home to them. Britain and especially London became a magnet for all manner of people and things, a world within a world. There were many distinguished foreign sojourners at the center of empire. Among the artists, exiles, and expatriots who visited or stayed were the deposed French emperor Louis Napoleon, the painters Vincent Van Gogh and James McNeill Whistler, and the writers Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, and Stephen Crane. Many of the era's great images and cultural moments came from outsiders: London was memorably painted by Claude Monet, anatomized by Henry James, serenaded by Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt, and entertained by Buffalo Bill. It received possibly its most searching critique from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who drafted the *Communist Manifesto* there in 1847. Not only the country's prosperity and cultural prestige attracted people, but also its tolerance and democracy. Despite the wage slavery and imperialist ideology that he saw only too clearly, Engels was forced to admit: "England is unquestionably the freest—that is, the least unfree—country in the world, North America not excepted."

The Age of Reading

> Even idleness is eager now,—eager for amusement; prone to excursion-trains, art-museums, periodical literature, and exciting novels.
>
> —*George Eliot*

Publishing became a major industry in the Victorian period. Magazines, newspapers, novels, poetry, histories, travel narratives, sporting news, scandal sheets, and penny cyclopedias kept people entertained and informed as never before. A thriving commercial literary culture was built on rising literacy rates, with as many as 97 percent of both sexes able to read by 1900. The expansion of the reading public went hand-in-hand with new print technologies, including steam-powered presses, the introduction of cheaper wood-pulp (instead of rag-based) paper, and, eventually, mechanized typesetting. Illustrations were widely used, notably in serialized fiction, where they helped unpracticed readers to follow the story. After 1875 wood engravings gave way to photogravure, and in the 1880s halftone printing enabled photographs to replace hand-drawn works as the primary means of visual communication. Colored illustrations were hand-tinted at first, often by poor women and children working at home; later chromolithography made colored reproductions of artwork possible. British publishing gradually transformed itself into a modern industry with worldwide distribution and influence. Copies of *The Times* circulated in uncharted Africa; illustrations torn from magazines adorned bushmen's huts in the Great Karoo.

Readers' tastes varied according to class, income, and education. The well-educated but unintellectual upper class formed only a small portion of the Victorian reading public. As the historian Walter Bagehot noted at the time, "A great part of the 'best' English people keep their minds in a state of decorous dullness." At the other end of the social scale, working-class literacy rates were far below the general standard but increased as working hours diminished, housing improved, and public libraries spread. The appetite for cheap literature steadily grew, feeding on a diet of religious tracts, self-help manuals, reprints of classics, penny newspapers, and the expanding range of sensational entertainment: "penny dreadfuls and shilling shockers," serials, bawdy ballads, and police reports of lurid crimes.

It was the burgeoning middle class, however, that formed the largest audience for new prose and poetry, and produced the authors to meet an increasing demand for books that would edify, instruct, and entertain. This was the golden age of the English novel, but poetry and serious nonfiction also did a brisk trade, as did "improving" works on religion, science, philosophy, and economics. But new books, especially fiction, were still a luxury in the earlier Victorian period. Publishers inflated prices so that readers would rent novels and narrative poems—just as people rent videos today—from commercial circulating libraries, which provided a larger and steadier income than individual sales. The collaboration between publishers and libraries required authors to produce "three deckers," long novels packaged in three separate volumes that thereby tripled rental fees and allowed three readers to peruse a single novel at one time. An economical alternative was to buy the successive "numbers" of a book as they appeared in individual, illustrated monthly installments. This form of publication became common with the tremendous success of Dickens's first novel *Pickwick Papers*, which came out in parts in 1836 and 1837. By the 1860s most novels were serialized in weekly or monthly magazines, giving the reader a wealth of additional material for about the same price.

The serialization of novels had a significant impact on literary form. Most of the major novelists, including Dickens, Thackeray, Collins, Gaskell, Trollope, and Eliot, had to organize their work into enticing, coherent morsels that kept characters and story lines clear from month to month, and left readers eager to buy the next installment. Authors felt pressure to keep ahead of deadlines, often not knowing which turn a story might take. But they also enjoyed the opportunity to stay in the public eye, to weave in references to current events, or to make adjustments based on sales and reviews. For their part, readers experienced literature as an ongoing part of their lives. They had time to absorb and interpret their reading, and even to influence the outcome of literary events: throughout his career, Dickens was badgered by readers who wanted to see more of one character, less of another, or prevent the demise of a third.

The close relationship authors shared with their public had its drawbacks: writers had to censor their content to meet the prim standards of "circulating library morality." In keeping with the Evangelical temper of the times, middle-class Victorian recreation centered on the home, where one of the most sacred institutions was

A NOVEL FACT.

Old-fashioned Party (with old-fashioned prejudices). "Ah! very Clever, I dare say. But I see it's Written by a Lady, and I want a Book that my *Daughters* may read. Give me Something else!"

Cartoon from *Punch* magazine, 1867.

the family reading circle. Usually wives or daughters read aloud to the rest of the household. Any hint of impropriety, anything that might bring "a blush to the cheek of the Young Person"—as Dickens warily satirized the trend—was aggressively ferreted out by publishers and libraries. Even revered poets such as Tennyson and Barrett Browning found themselves edited by squeamish publishers.

A better testimony to the intelligence and perceptiveness of the Victorian reading public is the fact that so many of today's classics were bestsellers then, including the novels of the Brontës, Dickens, and George Eliot; the poetry of Tennyson, Elizabeth and Robert Browning, and Christina Rossetti; and the essays of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold. These works were addressed to readers who had an impressive level of literary and general culture, kept up to snuff by the same magazines and reviews in which the best fiction, poetry, and prose appeared. Educated Victorians had an insatiable appetite for "serious" literature on religious issues, socioeconomic theory, scientific developments, and general information of all sorts. It was an era of outstanding, influential periodicals that combined entertaining writing with intellectual substance: politically oriented quarterlies such as the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and the Benthamite *Westminster Review*; more varied monthlies such as *Fraser's Magazine*, where Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* first appeared, and *Cornhill*, which published works by Ruskin, Thackeray, Eliot, Trollope, and Hardy; the satirical weekly *Punch*, still published today; and Dickens's low-priced weeklies *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* for a more general readership. As a rule, the public had faith in the press, regarding it as a forum essential to the progress and management of democracy. At the same time, as political and cultural power broadened, the press took seriously its new role as creator, shaper, and transmitter of public opinion.

Celebrated authors were hailed as heroes, regarded as public property, and respected as sages; they inspired a passionate adulation. Robert Browning first approached Elizabeth Barrett by writing her a fan letter. The public sought instruction and guidance from authors, who were alternately flattered and dismayed by the responsibilities thrust upon them. The critic Walter Houghton points out that "every writer had his congregation of devoted or would-be devoted disciples who read his work in much the spirit they had once read the Bible." Robert Browning lived to see an international proliferation of Browning Societies, dedicated to expounding his supposed moral teachings. Hero worship was yet another Victorian invention.

The Age of Self-Scrutiny

The energy of Victorian literature is its most striking trait, and self-exploration is its favorite theme. Victorians produced a staggeringly large body of literature, renowned for its variety and plenitude. Their writing is distinguished by its particularity, eccentricity, long-windedness, earnestness, ornateness, fantasy, humor, experimentation, and self-consciousness. As befits a scientific age, most authors exhibited a willingness to experiment with new forms of representation, coupled with a penchant for realism, a love of closely observed detail: Tennyson was famous for his myopic descriptions of flowers; Browning transcribed tics of speech like a clinical psychologist; Eliot compared her scenes to Dutch genre paintings; and Dickens indignantly defended the accuracy of his characterization and the plausibility of his plots. Sustained labor was as important as keen observation: "lyric" poems ran to hundreds of lines, novels spanned a thousand pages, essayists constructed lengthy paragraphs with three or four generous sentences. One single book, alternately discredited and revered, underpinned the whole literary enterprise. The King James Version of the Bible shaped the cadences, supplied the imagery, and proposed the structures through which Victorians apprehended the universe; knowledge of it immensely deepens one's appreciation of the time.

Like the photographic close-ups invented by Julia Margaret Cameron, much Victorian literature tries to get at what Matthew Arnold called "the buried life" of individuals struggling for identity in a commercial, technocratic society. In the 1830s Carlyle was already alluding to "these autobiographical times of ours." Autobiography rapidly assumed new importance as a literary form, driven by the apparent necessity of each person working out a personal approach to the universe and a position within the culture. As Matthew Arnold announced in 1853, "the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced."

Often written under intense emotional pressure, nonfiction prose on social or aesthetic issues turned into an art form as personal as lyric poetry, expressing the writers' interior lives as well as their ideas. Yet the very variety of disguised or semiautobiographical forms (such as the dramatic monologue) suggests that introspection produced its own moral perplexities. In a culture that stressed action, production, civic duty, and family responsibility, such apparently self-indulgent self-scrutiny might well seem unworthy: "I sometimes hold it half a sin / To put in words the grief I feel" said Tennyson about the loss of his best friend. Thus the guilty confessional impulse was forced underground to reemerge almost everywhere: in first-person narratives, devotional poems, travelogues, novels of religious or emotional crisis, intimate essays, dramatic lyrics, fictionalized memoirs, and recollections of famous people and places.

The Major Genres

Victorian literature is remarkable in that there were three great literary genres: nonfiction prose emerged as the artistic equal of poetry and fiction. Topical and influential in their day, the criticism and essays of such writers as Carlyle, Mill, Newman, Ruskin, Darwin, Arnold, Nightingale, Pater, and Wilde achieved classic status by virtue of their distinctive styles and force of intellect. In richly varied rhythms they record the process of original minds seeking to understand the relation of individuals to nature and culture in the new industrial world. Though their works might be categorized as religion, politics, aesthetics, or science, all these authors wrote revealingly of their intellectual development, and all explored the literary resources of the language, from simile and metaphor to fable and fantasy. Oscar Wilde argued for the supreme creativity of the autobiographical critic-as-artist: "That is what the highest criticism really is, the record of one's own soul." His teacher Walter Pater remarked simply that prose is "the special and opportune art of the modern world."

Poets struggled to refute this sentiment. Poetry commanded more respect than prose as a literary genre, but despite the immense success of Tennyson, it gradually lost ground in popularity. Whether this occurred because of, or in spite of, poetry's deliberate cultivation of a mass audience is difficult to say. But whereas Romantic poets were greeted as visionaries, praised for opening dazzling new vistas onto the self and nature, Victorian poets were encouraged to keep their ideas down to earth, to offer practical advice about managing the vicissitudes of heart and soul in a workaday world. The Romantic emphasis on self-expression gave way to more qualified soul-searching with an eye toward moral content that the public could grasp and apply. Carlyle's famous admonition in *Sartor Resartus* set the tone for the period: "Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe*." In other words, forget the self-indulgent quest for happiness or self-knowledge associated with Byronic heroes; strive instead to improve society and practice greater artistic control; know your work and do it.

Whether they felt guilty, inspired, infuriated, or amused over their audience's thirst for instruction, Victorian poets took advantage of it to expand the resources of poetry in English. Though there are obvious lines of influence from the Romantics—Keats to Tennyson, Shelley to Browning, Wordsworth to Arnold—the innovations are perhaps even more striking. Eclectic poets introduced their readers to a bewildering variety of rhythms, stanzas, topics, words, and ideas that had not been seen in poetry before. Contemporary social concerns vied with—and sometimes merged into—Greek mythology and Arthurian legend as subject matter. Swinburne and Hopkins engaged in verbal pyrotechnics that produced new meters amid an ecstasy of sound; Elizabeth Barrett Browning unleashed stormy feminist lyrics marked by a dazzling intellect; Arnold captured readers with his startling emotional honesty; Christina Rossetti whittled her lines down to a thought-teasing purity; Arthur Symons and William Ernest Henley adapted French *vers libre* to create modern "free verse."

Perhaps the most important development was the rise of the dramatic monologue. Almost every poet found occasion to speak through characters apparently quite foreign in time, place, or social situation. Tennyson's liquid vowel sounds and Browning's clotted consonant clusters are trademarks of very different styles, but both poets use their distinctive music to probe the psychology of the speakers in their dramatic poems. Adapting the sound of their lines to fit the rhythms of their speakers' thoughts, poets acquired a more conversational tone and expanded the psychological range of their craft. While Browning was preoccupied with extreme psychological states, many poets shared his desire to represent a person or event from multiple perspectives, through shifting voices and unreliable narrators. These relativistic approaches also encouraged poets to experiment with new angles of vision suggested by the initially disorienting array of developments in visual culture. Photography, panoramas, stereopticons, impressionist painting, illustrated newspapers, and the mass reproduction of art images all left their mark on poetic practice. The ultimate effect was to engender poems whose ability to please or even communicate depended on the active participation of the reader.

Though nonfiction prose and poetry flourished, the Victorian era is still considered the great age of British fiction. Novelists strove to embody the character and genius of the time. The novel's triumphant adaptation of practically any material into "realistic" narrative and detail fueled an obsession with storytelling that spilled over into anecdotal painting, program music, and fictive or autobiographical frames for essays and histories. The novels themselves generally explored the relation between individuals and their society through the mechanism of a central love plot, around which almost any subject could be investigated, including the quest for self-knowledge, religious crises, industrialism, education, women's roles, crime and punishment, or the definition of gentlemanliness.

Convoluted by later standards, Victorian novels received their most famous assessment from Henry James, who regarded them as "loose baggy monsters." The English novel, he said, is "a treasure house of detail, but an indifferent whole." Shrewd as the observation was, it overlooks the thematic density that unifies Dickens's sprawling three-deckers; the moral consciousness that registers every nuance of thought in George Eliot's rural panoramas; the intricate narrative structures and ardent self-questioning that propel the tormented romances of the Brontës. Their novels work within an established social frame, focusing on the characters' freedom to act within fairly narrow moral codes in an unpredictable universe; they deal with questions of social responsibility and personal choice, the impulses of passion and the dictates of conscience. Yet even as they portrayed familiar details of contemporary social life, novelists challenged the confines of "realist" fiction, experimenting with multiple perspectives, unreliable narrators, stories within stories, direct appeals to the reader, and strange extremes of behavior.

The Role of Art in Society

"The past for poets, the present for pigs." This polemical statement by the painter Samuel Palmer sums up much of the period's literary debate. Because Victorian times seemed so thoroughly to break from the past, "modern" became a common but often prejudicial word. Was there anything of lasting artistic value to be found in ordinary everyday life? Many writers felt there was not; they preferred to indulge instead in what Tennyson called the "passion of the past." Most poetry shunned the details of contemporary urban existence, and even the great novelists like Dickens, Eliot, and Thackeray situated much of their work in the pre-Victorian world of their parents. Some of this writing was escapist, but many authors saw in earlier times a more ethically and aesthetically coherent world that could serve as a model for Victorian social

reform. The Pre-Raphaelite painters and their literary allies sought out medieval models, while Matthew Arnold returned to the Greco-Roman classics: "They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in art, and we do not."

But another group vigorously disagreed; they stressed the importance of creating an up-to-date art that would validate or at least grapple with the uniqueness of Victorian life. In *Aurora Leigh* Elizabeth Barrett Browning contended that "this live throbbing age" should take precedence over all other topics: "if there's room for poets in this world," she said, "Their sole work is to represent the age / Their age, not Charlemagne's." In 1850 the critic F. G. Stephens argued that poets should emphasize "the poetry of the things about us; our railways, factories, mines, roaring cities, steam vessels, and the endless novelties and wonders produced every day." As the century wore on, there was a broadening in social scope: the life of the working classes became a serious literary topic, and in the 1870s and 1880s "naturalist" writers probed the structures of everyday life at near-subsistence level. Thomas Hardy wrote searching studies of rural life; George Gissing, whose first wife was a prostitute, documented in harsh detail "the nether world" of backstreet London.

Whether they favored the past or present as a literary landscape, whether they criticized or lauded the times they lived in, most Victorian writers felt at home in their era. Though they had their own interests, they did not act as alienated outcasts but addressed social needs and responded to the public desire for instruction and reassurance. They recognized the force of John Stuart Mill's remark: "Whatever we may think or affect to think of the present age, we cannot get out of it; we must suffer with its sufferings, and enjoy with its enjoyments; we must share in its lot."

Amid all this energetic literary production, a substantial portion of readers demanded to know if literature had any value at all. Utilitarians regarded art as a waste of time and energy, while Evangelicals were suspicious of art's appeal to the senses and emotions rather than the soul and the conscience. "All poetry is misrepresentation," said the founder of Utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, who could not see how fanciful words might be of service to humanity. Such was the temper of the time that writers strove mightily to prove that audiences could derive moral and religious benefit from impractical things like circuses or watercolors. Even secular critics sought to legitimize art's role in society by contending that if religion failed, literature would take its place as a guiding light. "Literature is but a branch of Religion," said Carlyle; "in our time, it is the only branch that still shows any greenness." "More and more," said Arnold, "mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us."

The great expectations most Victorians had for their literature inevitably produced reactions against such moral earnestness. In the theater, a huge variety of comedies, melodramas, pantomimes, and music-hall skits amused all classes; 150,000 people a day went to theaters in London during the 1860s. Yet in comparison to other literary forms, little of lasting value remains. Though leading authors such as Browning, Tennyson, and Henry James tried their hand at writing for the stage, it was not until the 1890s, with the sophisticated wit of Oscar Wilde, the subtle social inquiry of Arthur Wing Pinero, and the provocative "problem plays" of Bernard Shaw, that British theater offered more than light entertainment for the masses. The way for serious drama had been prepared by the wonderfully clever musicals of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, which satirized such topics as Aestheticism (*Patience*, 1881), the House of Lords (*Iolanthe*, 1882), and the struggle for sexual equality (*Princess Ida*, 1884). Victorian social drama came into its own late in the era, when it began directly to explore its own relevance, dissecting social and theatrical conventions even as it questioned whether art could—or should—teach anything at all.

Doubts about the mission of art to improve society culminated in the Aesthetic Movement of the 1880s and 1890s, whose writers sought to show, in Oscar Wilde's words, that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all." In an era of practicality, art declared its freedom by positing its sheer uselessness. Wilde argued that it is "through Art, and through Art only, that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence." Thus many authors at the end of the Victorian period renounced the values that characterize the age as a whole.

And yet the Aesthetes were still quintessentially Victorian in feeling that, as writers, they had to expose their inner being, whether uplifting or shocking, to the public gaze. In their thoughts and deeds, but especially in their words, writers were expected to harness their autobiographical impulses to society's need for guidance and amusement—or even outrage. "I never travel without my diary," one of Wilde's characters remarks: "One should always have something sensational to read in the train."

Every generalization about the Victorians comes with a ready-made contradiction: they were materialist but religious, self-confident but insecure, monstrous exploiters who devoted themselves to humane reforms; they were given to blanket pronouncements about the essential nature of sexes and races, the social order, and the Christian universe, but they relentlessly probed the foundations of their thought; they demanded a moral literature and thrilled to mindless page-turners. Yet in all these matters they were constantly concerned with rules, codes of duty and behavior, their places in a complex and often frustrating social order. Even the alienated rebels of the 1890s cared intensely (a favorite word) what people thought and how shocking their calculated transgressions might make them.

For a few decades after World War I, the Victorians' obsession with the tightly buttoned structures of everyday life seemed their only legacy, offering an easy target for Modernists who sought to declare their own free-thinking independence. "Queen Victoria was like a great paper-weight," wrote H. G. Wells, "that for half a century sat upon men's minds, and when she was removed their ideas began to blow about all over the place haphazardly." But the end of the Victorian period is now almost a century past, and the winds of change have blown many Victorian ideas back into favor. More and more readers delight to discover beneath the stiff manners and elaborate conventions of a bygone era an anxious, humorous, dynamic people very much like ourselves.

. . . I AM NOW GOING TO ask you to consider with me farther, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power. Not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned, as "Queens' Gardens."

And here, in the very outset, we are met by a far deeper question, which—strange though this may seem—remains among many of us yet quite undecided, in spite of its infinite importance.

We cannot determine what the queenly power of women should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. We cannot consider how education may fit them for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty. And there never was a time when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question—quite vital to all social happiness. The relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet estimated with entire consent. We hear of the mission and of the rights of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man;—as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcileable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong—perhaps even more foolishly wrong (for I will anticipate thus far what I hope to prove)—is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.

This, I say, is the most foolish of all errors respecting her who was made to be the helpmate of man. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily by a slave!

Let us try, then, whether we cannot get at some clear and harmonious idea (it must be harmonious if it is true) of what womanly mind and virtue are in power and office, with respect to man's; and how their relations, rightly accepted, aid, and increase, the vigour, and honour, and authority of both. . . .

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril

and trial:—to him, therefore, the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued, often misled, and *always* hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea;—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of Home.

And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot: but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless.

This, then, I believe to be,—will you not admit it to be,—the woman's true place and power? But do not you see that, to fulfil this, she must—as far as one can use such terms of a human creature—be incapable of error? So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of woman. In that great sense—"La donna e mobile," not "Qual piùm' al vento;"[1] no, nor yet "Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made;"[2] but variable as the *light*, manifold in fair and serene division, that it may take the colour of all that it falls upon, and exalt it.

I have been trying, thus far, to show you what should be the place, and what the power of woman. Now, secondly, we ask, What kind of education is to fit her for these?

And if you indeed think this a true conception of her office and dignity, it will not be difficult to trace the course of education which would fit her for the one, and raise her to the other.

The first of our duties to her—no thoughtful persons now doubt this—is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health and perfect her beauty; the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendor of activity and of delicate strength. . . .

1. "Woman is changeful," not "like a feather in the wind." Phrases from an aria in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1851).
2. Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion* (1808), Canto 6.

. . . Do not think you can make a girl lovely, if you do not make her happy. There is not one restraint you put on a good girl's nature—there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort—which will not be indelibly written on her features, with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue. . . .

The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace, which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years,—full of sweet records; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise;—opening always—modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won, and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise—it is eternal youth.

Thus, then, you have first to mould her physical frame, and then, as the strength she gains will permit you, to fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love.

All such knowledge should be given her as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men: and yet it should be given, not as knowledge,—not as if it were, or could be, for her an object to know; but only to feel, and to judge. It is of no moment, as a matter of pride or perfectness in herself, whether she knows many languages or one; but it is of the utmost that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger, and to understand the sweetness of a stranger's tongue. It is of no moment to her own worth or dignity that she should be acquainted with this science or that; but it is of the highest that she should be trained in habits of accurate thought; that she should understand the meaning, the inevitableness, and the loveliness of natural laws, and follow at least some one path of scientific attainment, as far as to the threshold of that bitter Valley of Humiliation, into which only the wisest and bravest of men can descend, owning themselves for ever children, gathering pebbles on a boundless shore. It is of little consequence how many positions of cities she knows, or how many dates of events, or how many names of celebrated persons—it is not the object of education to turn a woman into a dictionary; but it is deeply necessary that she should be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination; to apprehend, with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too often only eclipses by his reasoning, and disconnects by his arrangement: it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch sight, through the darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with its retribution. But chiefly of all, she is to be taught to extend the limits of her sympathy with respect to that history which is being for ever determined, as the moments pass in which she draws her peaceful breath; and to the contemporary calamity which, were it but rightly mourned by her, would recur no more hereafter. She is to exercise herself in imagining what would be the effects upon her mind and conduct, if she were daily brought into the presence of the suffering which is not the less real because shut from her sight. She is to be taught somewhat to understand the nothingness of the proportion which that little world in which she lives and loves, bears to the world in which God lives and loves;—and solemnly she is to be taught to strive that her thoughts of piety may not be feeble in proportion to the number they embrace, nor her prayer more languid than it is for the momentary relief from pain of her husband or her child, when it is uttered for the multitudes of those who have none to love them,—and is "for all who are desolate and oppressed." . . .

I believe, then, . . . that a girl's education should be nearly, in its course and material of study, the same as a boy's; but quite differently directed. A woman in any rank of life, ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know, but to know it in a different way. His command of it should be foundational and progressive, hers, general and accomplished for daily and helpful use. Not but that it would often be wiser in men to learn things in a womanly sort of way, for present use, and to seek for the discipline and training of their mental powers in such branches of study as will be afterwards fitted for social service; but, speaking broadly, a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends.

Yet, observe, with exquisite accuracy as far as she reaches. There is a wide difference between elementary knowledge and superficial knowledge—between a firm beginning, and a feeble smattering. A woman may always help her husband by what she knows, however little; by what she half-knows, or mis-knows, she will only teaze him.

And indeed, if there were to be any difference between a girl's education and a boy's, I should say that of the two the girl should be earlier led, as her intellect ripens faster, into deep and serious subjects; and that her range of literature should be, not more, but less frivolous, calculated to add the qualities of patience and seriousness to her natural poignancy of thought and quickness of wit; and also to keep her in a lofty and pure element of thought. I enter not now into any question of choice of books; only be sure that her books are not heaped up in her lap as they fall out of the package of the circulating library, wet with the last and lightest spray of the fountain of folly. . . .

Without, however, venturing here on any attempt at decision how much novel reading should be allowed, let me at least clearly assert this, that whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for what is *out* of them, but for what is *in* them. The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt, or hide itself in, a powerful book, never does any harm to a noble girl; but the emptiness of an author oppresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her. And if she can have access to a good library of old and classical books, there need be no choosing at all. Keep the modern magazine and novel out of your girl's way: turn her loose into the old library every wet day, and let her alone. She will find what is good for her; you cannot; for there is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's—you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does,—she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as the narcissus does, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life; but you cannot fetter her; she must take her own fair form and way, if she take any, and in mind as in body, must have always—

"Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty."[1]

Let her loose in the library, I say, as you do a fawn in a field. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you; and the good ones too, and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest thought were good. . . .

And not only in the material and in the course, but yet more earnestly in the spirit of it, let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments, and then complain of their frivolity. Give them the same advantages that you give their brothers—appeal to the same grand instincts of virtue in them; teach *them* also that courage and truth are the pillars of their being: do you think that they would not answer that appeal, brave and true as they are even now, when you know that there is hardly a girls' school in this Christian kingdom where the children's courage or sincerity would be thought of half so much importance as their way of coming in at a door; and when the whole system of society, as respects the mode of establishing them in life, is one rotten plague of cowardice and imposture—cowardice, in not daring to let them live, or love, except as their neighbours choose; and imposture, in bringing, for the purposes of our own pride, the full glow of the world's worst vanity upon a girl's eyes, at the very period when the whole happiness of her future existence depends upon her remaining undazzled? . . .

Thus far, then, of the nature, thus far of the teaching, of woman, and thus of her household office, and queenliness. We come now to our last, our widest question,—What is her queenly office with respect to the state?

Generally, we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty, relating to his own home, and a public work or duty, which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work or duty, relating to her own home, and a public work and duty, which is also the expansion of that.

Now, the man's work for his own home is, as has been said, to secure its maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness.

Expand both these functions. The man's duty, as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state.

What the man is at his own gate, defending it, if need be, against insult and spoil, that also, not in a less, but in a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home, if need be, even to the spoiler, to do his more incumbent work there.

And, in like manner, what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty; that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare. . . .

. . . There is no putting by that crown; queens you must always be; queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself, and will for ever bow, before the myrtle crown, and the stainless sceptre, of womanhood. But, alas! you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest; and leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men, in defiance of the power, which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all Peace, the wicked among you betray, and the good forget.

"Prince of Peace." Note that name. When kings rule in that name, and nobles, and the judges of the earth, they also, in their narrow place, and mortal measure, receive the power of it. There are no other rulers than they: other rule than theirs is but *mis*rule; they who govern verily "*Dei Gratiâ*" are all princes, yes, or princesses, of peace. There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery in the earth, but the guilt of it lies lastly with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle; but men are feeble in sympathy, and contracted in hope; it is you only who can feel the depths of pain; and conceive the way of its healing. Instead of trying to do this, you turn away from it; you shut yourselves within your park walls and garden gates; and you are content to know that there is beyond them a whole world in wilderness—a world of secrets which you dare not penetrate, and of suffering which you dare not conceive. . . .

1. William Wordsworth, "She Was a Phantom of Delight" (1807).

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Frances Power Cobbe 1822-1904

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'Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors.'

THERE was an allegory rather popular about thirty years ago, whose manifest purpose was to impress on the juvenile mind that tendency which Mr. Matthew Arnold has ingeniously designated 'Hebraism.' The hero of the tale descends upon earth from some distant planet, and is conducted by a mundane cicerone through one of our great cities, where he beholds the docks and arsenals, the streets and marts, the galleries of art, and the palaces of royalty. The visitor admires everything till he happens to pass a grave-yard. 'What is that gloomy spot?' he asks of his companion.

'It is a cemetery,' replies the guide.

'A — what did you say?' inquires the son of the star.

'A grave-yard; a place of public interment; where we bury our dead,' reiterates the cicerone.

The visitor, pale with awe and terror, learns at last that there is in this world such a thing as *Death*, and (as he is forbidden to return to his own planet) he resolves to dedicate every moment left to him to prepare himself for that fearful event and all that may follow it.

Had that visitor heard for the first time upon his arrival on earth of another incident of human existence — namely, *Marriage*, it may be surmised that his astonishment and awe would also have been considerable. To his eager inquiry whether men and women earnestly strove to prepare themselves for so momentous an occurrence, he would have received the puzzling reply that women frequently devoted themselves with perfectly Hebraistic singleness of aim to that special purpose; but that men, on the contrary, very rarely included any preparation for the married state among the items of their widest Hellenistic culture. But this anomaly would be trifling compared to others which would be revealed to him. 'Ah,' we can hear him say to his guide as they pass into a village church. 'What a pretty sight is this! What is happening to that sweet young woman in white who is giving her hand to the good-looking fellow beside her, all the company decked in holiday attire, and the joy-bells shaking the old tower overhead? She is receiving some great honour, is she not? The Prize of Virtue, perhaps?'

'Oh, yes,' would reply the friend; 'an honour certainly. She is being Married.' After a little further explanation the visitor would pursue his inquiry:

'Of course, having entered this honourable state of matrimony, she has some privilege above the women who are not chosen by anybody? I notice her husband has just said, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." Does that mean that she will henceforth have the control of his money altogether, or only that he takes her into partnership?

'*Pas précisément*, my dear sir. By our law it is *her* goods and earnings, present and future, which belong to him from this moment.'

'You don't say so? But then, of course, his goods are hers also?'

'Oh dear, no! not at all. He is only bound to find her food; and truth to tell, not very strictly or efficaciously bound to do that.'

'How! do I understand you? Is it possible that here in the most solemn religious act, which I perceive your prayer book calls "The Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony," every husband makes a generous promise, which promise is not only a mockery, but the actual reverse and parody of the real state of the case: the man who promises giving nothing, and the woman who is silent giving all?'

'Well, yes; I suppose that is something like it, as to the letter of the law. But then, of course, practically — '

'Practically, I suppose few men can really be so unmanly and selfish as the law warrants them in being. Yet some, I fear, may aail themselves of such authority. May I ask another question? As you subject women who enter the marriage state to such very severe penalties as this, what worse have you in store for women who lead a dissolute life, to the moral injury of the community?'

'Oh, the law takes nothing from them. Whatever they earn or inherit is their own. They are able, also, to sue the fathers of their children for their maintenance, which a wife, of course, is not allowed to do on behalf of *her* little ones, because she and her husband are one in the eye of the law.'

'One question still further — your criminals? Do they always forfeit their entire property on conviction?'

'Only for the most heinous crimes; felony and murder, for example.'

'Pardon me; I must seem to you so stupid! Why is the property of the woman who commits Murder, and the property of the woman who commits Matrimony, dealt with alike by your law?

Leaving our little allegory and in sober seriousness, we must all admit that the just and expedient treatment of women by men is one of the most obscure problems, alike of equity and of policy. Nor of women only, but of all classes and races of human beings whose condition is temporarily or permanently one of comparative weakness and dependence. In past ages, the case was simple enough. No question of right or duty disturbed the conscience of Oriental or Spartan, of Roman or Norman, in dealing with

his wife, his Helot, his slave, or his serf. 'Le droit du plus fort' was unassailed in theory and undisturbed in practice. But we, in our day, are perplexed and well nigh overwhelmed with the difficulties presented to us. What ought the Americans to do with their Negroes? What ought we to do with our Hindoos? What ought all civilised people to do with their women? It is all very easy to go on driving down the 'high *à priori*' road of equal rights for all human beings, but as it is quite clear that children and idiots cannot be entrusted with full civil and political rights, the question always resolves itself into the further one, Where shall we draw the line? When has a human being fairly passed out of the stage of pupilage and attained his majority?

At the head of this paper I have placed the four categories under which persons are now excluded from many civil, and all political rights in England. They were complacently quoted this year by the *Times* as every way fit and proper exceptions; but yet it has appeared to not a few, that the place assigned to Women among them is hardly any longer suitable. To a woman herself who is aware that she has never committed a Crime; who fondly believes that she is not an Idiot; and who is alas! only too sure she is no longer a Minor, there naturally appears some incongruity in placing her, for such important purposes, in an association wherein otherwise she would scarcely be likely to find herself. But in all seriousness, the question presses, Ought Englishwomen of full age, at the present state of affairs, to be considered as having legally attained majority? or ought they permanently to be considered, for all civil and political purposes, as minors? This, we venture to think, is the real point at issue between the friends and opponents of 'women's rights,' and it would save, perhaps, not a little angry feeling and aimless discussion, were we to keep it well in view and not allow ourselves to be drawn off into collateral debates about equality and abstract rights. Let us admit (if it be desired) that the pupilage in which women have been hitherto kept has been often inevitable, and sometimes salutary. The question is, should it be prolonged indefinitely?

In the present paper we shall attempt to consider the most striking instance wherein the existing principle presses upon women, and where its injustice appears most distinctly, — namely, in the regulation of the Property of Married Women under the Common Law. We shall endeavour to do this with all possible fairness and equanimity. The acrimony which too often creeps into arguments on this subject is every way needless and mischievous. Of course it is not pleasant to women to be told they are 'physically, morally, and intellectually inferior' to their companions. The humblest individual is neither more contented, nor (we believe) much the better for being reminded of congenital defects which he can never hope to overcome; and for a proud and gifted woman to be told that she is in

every possible respect inferior to the footman who stands behind her chair, can hardly be thought pleasing intelligence. Nevertheless, women are foolish to be angry with the man who in plain words tells them straightforwardly that in his opinion such is the case. After all he pays them a better compliment than the fop who professes to adore them as so many wingless angels, and privately values them as so many dolls. In any case all such discussion is beside our present aim. We shall endeavour, in these pages, neither to talk with one party, as if all instinct and feeling were the creatures of law, and could be altered by 'An Act to Review the Constitution of Human Nature;' nor with another, as if the particular sentiment of our age and country about 'woman's sphere' were the only possible standard of legislation for all time. If, as Pope said, 'the world were inhabited by Men, Women, and Herveys,' we should endeavour to write like a Hervey, to do justice to both the other parties!

Mr. G. Shaw Lefevre has this summer carried through two readings in Parliament, and obtained a favourable report upon, 'A Bill to Amend the Law with respect to the Property of Married Women.' Let us briefly state what is the existing law which it is proposed to amend; what may be urged in its behalf; and what may be said against it.

By the common law of England a married woman has not legal existence, so far as property is concerned, independently of her husband. The husband and wife are assumed to be one person, and that person is the husband. The wife can make no contract, and can neither sue nor be sued. Whatever she possess of personal property at the time of her marriage, or whatever she may afterwards earn or inherit, belongs to her husband, without control on her part. If she possess real estate, so long as her husband lives he receives and spends the income derived from it, being only forbidden to sell it without her consent. From none of her property is he bound to reserve anything, or make any provision for her maintenance or that of her children. This is the law for all, but practically it affects only two classes of women, viz. those who marry hurriedly or without proper advisers, and those whose property at the time of marriage is too small to permit of the expense of a settlement; in other words, the whole middle and lower ranks of women, and a certain portion of the upper ranks. Women of the richer class, with proper advisers, never come under the provisions of the Common Law, being carefully protected therefrom by an intricate system elaborated for the purpose by the courts of Equity, to which the victims of the Common Law have for years applied for redress. That system always involves considerable legal expenses, and an arrangement with trustees which is often extremely inconvenient and injurious to the interests of the married couple; nevertheless it is understood to be so great a boon that none who can afford to avail themselves of it, fail to do so.

END EXCERPT

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BRANTWOOD,
June 19th, 1889.

1. Ruskin's health was failing, and his mind growing confused as he dictated this final chapter of *Praeterita* to his Scottish cousin Joan (or Joanna), who looked after him in his later years. She was married to Arthur Severn, son of the painter Joseph Severn.
2. Rose La Touche (1849–1875) was an Irish girl with whom Ruskin had fallen desperately in love when she was nine and he forty; he felt despair after her early death.
3. Fountains in Rome and Siena.
4. Scene of Christ's first miracle, in which he transforms water into wine. See John 1.1–11.
5. Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908), American man of letters, and the first professor of art history at Harvard. He and Ruskin met in 1855 and conducted an epistolary friendship for many years.
6. The inscription over the city gate reads: "More than her gates Siena opens [illegible] to you

Florence Nightingale

1820–1910

Revered as "the Lady of the Lamp," Florence Nightingale was in fact a high-powered administrator who reformed the British Army medical service and helped to found the profession of modern nursing. In 1854 she led a group of nurses to attend wounded soldiers in the Crimean War, where unsanitary conditions and colossal mismanagement had created a disaster. Her administrative genius saved countless lives, and she was acclaimed as a national heroine. For the rest of her life she was a legend, and thanks to her mythic reputation she was able to initiate widespread health reforms. Although her sister Parthe complained that Florence actually "was a shocking nurse," the sentimentalized image of the angel of mercy made her accomplishments more palatable to the Victorians.

She was reared in a wealthy family horrified by her desire to enter nursing and bitterly opposed to her plans to pursue such a disreputable and unladylike occupation. "It was as if I had wanted to be a kitchen-maid," she said. Indeed, they saw no need for her to seek any occupation at all. But from an early age, Nightingale rebelled against the social obligations and feminine pursuits—needlework, music, watercolors—with which a well-bred young lady was expected to fill her day. In her diary she wrote: "What am I that I am not in harmony with all this, that their life is not good enough for me? . . . A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill & employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me. . . . Why, oh my God, cannot I be satisfied with the life that satisfies so many people?"

Nightingale was unusually well-educated for a woman, since her father taught his daughters classics, philosophy, science, and languages. Yet her parents initially refused her request to study mathematics with a tutor. Her mother lamented, "We are ducks who have hatched a wild swan." For many years her mother and sister used emotional blackmail to thwart her ambition for a useful vocation. At 32 she still had not broken free, and her frustrations found vent in an autobiographical essay, *Cassandra*, which vividly depicts her impatience with the conventional lives of women.

Although it was never published during her lifetime, *Cassandra* was privately circulated and immediately began to take its place in the literature of feminist protest. John Stuart Mill alluded to the essay in *The Subjection of Women*, and in her classic book about women writers, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf quoted Nightingale's anguished complaint, "women never have an half hour . . . that they can call their own." The critic Elaine Showalter calls *Cassandra* "a major text of English feminism, a link between Wollstonecraft and Woolf." Denouncing the enforced frivolity of women's lives, and insisting on privacy and time as the necessary conditions for creative work, Nightingale paved the way for later feminist thinkers.

Cassandra[1]

1

The voice of one crying in the *crowd*,
"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."[2]

One often comes to be thus wandering alone in the bitterness of life without. It might be that such an one might be tempted to seek an escape in hope of a more congenial sphere. Yet, perhaps, if prematurely we dismiss ourselves from this world, all

1. Cassandra was a Trojan princess to whom Apollo gave the gift of foretelling the future; when she refused his advances, he doomed her to have her prophecies ignored. Elaine Showalter notes: "The myth suggests that women can be driven mad by their society." Nightingale had refused an offer of marriage from Richard Monckton Milnes.
2. Cf. Isaiah 40.3: "The voice of him that crieth in the

may even have to be suffered through again—the premature birth may not contribute to the production of another being, which must be begun again from the beginning.

Such an one longs to replunge into the happy unconscious sleep of the rest of the race! they slumber in one another's arms—they are not yet awake. To them evil and suffering are not, for they are not conscious of evil. While one alone, awake and prematurely alive to it, must wander out in silence and solitude—such an one has awakened too early, has risen up too soon, has rejected the companionship of the race, unlinked to any human being. Such an one sees the evil they do not see, and yet has no power to discover the remedy for it.

Why have women passion, intellect, moral activity—these three—and a place in society where no one of the three can be exercised? Men say that God punishes for complaining. No, but men are angry with misery. They are irritated with women for not being happy. They take it as a personal offence. To God alone may women complain, without insulting Him!

And women, who are afraid, while in words they acknowledge that God's work is good, to say, Thy will be *not* done (declaring another order of society from that which He has made), go about maudling to each other and teaching to their daughters that "women have no passions." In the conventional society, which men have made for women, and women have accepted, they *must* have none, they *must* act the farce of hypocrisy, the lie that they are without passion—and therefore what else can they say to their daughters, without giving the lie to themselves?

"Suffering, sad" female "humanity!" What are these feelings which they are taught to consider as disgraceful, to deny to themselves? What form do the Chinese feet assume when denied their proper development? If the young girls of the "higher classes," who never commit a false step, whose justly earned reputations were never sullied even by the stain which the fruit of mere "knowledge of good and evil" leaves behind, were to speak, and say what are their thoughts employed upon, their *thoughts*, which alone are free, what would they say?

That, with the phantom companion of their fancy, they talk (not love, they are too innocent, too pure, too full of genius and imagination for that, but) they talk, in fancy, of that which interests them most; they seek a companion for their every thought; the companion they find not in reality they seek in fancy, or, if not that, if not absorbed in endless conversations, they see themselves engaged with him in stirring events, circumstances which call out the interest wanting to them. Yes, fathers, mothers, you who see your daughter proudly rejecting all semblance of flirtation, primly engaged in the duties of the breakfast table, you little think how her fancy compensates itself by endless interviews and sympathies (sympathies either for ideas or events) with the fancy's companion of the hour! And you say, "She is not susceptible. Women have no passion." Mothers, who cradle yourselves in visions about the domestic hearth, how many of your sons and daughters are *there*, do you think, while sitting round under your complacent maternal eye? Were you there yourself during your own (now forgotten) girlhood?

What are the thoughts of these young girls while one is singing Schubert, another is reading the Review, and a third is busy embroidering? Is not one fancying herself the nurse of some new friend in sickness; another engaging in romantic dangers with him, such as call out the character and afford more food for sympathy than the monotonous events of domestic society; another undergoing unheard-of trials under

the observation of some one whom she has chosen as the companion of her dream? another having a loving and loved companion in the life she is living, which many do not want to change?

And is not all this most natural, inevitable? Are they, who are too much ashamed of it to confess it even to themselves, to be blamed for that which cannot be otherwise, the causes of which stare one in the face, *if one's eyes were not closed?* Many struggle against this as a "snare." No Trappist ascetic watches or fasts more in the body than these do in the soul! They understand the discipline of the Thebaïd[3]—the life-long agonies to which those strong moral Mohicans subjected themselves. How cordially they could do the same, in order to escape the worse torture of wandering "vain imaginations." But the laws of God for moral well-being are not thus to be obeyed. We fast mentally, scourge ourselves morally, use the intellectual hair-shirt, in order to subdue that perpetual day-dreaming, which is so dangerous! We resolve "this day month I will be free from it"; twice a day with prayer and written record of the times when we have indulged in it, we endeavor to combat it. Never, with the slightest success. By mortifying vanity we do ourselves no good. It is the want of interest in our life which produces it; by filling up that want of interest in our life we can alone remedy it. And, did we even see this, how can we make the difference? How obtain the interest which Society declares *she* does not want, and *we* cannot want?

What are novels? What is the secret of the charm of every romance that ever was written? The first thing in a good novel is to place the persons together in circumstances which naturally call out the high feelings and thoughts of the character which afford food for sympathy between them on these points—romantic events they are called. The second is that the heroine has *generally* no family ties (almost *invariably* no mother), or, if she has, these do not interfere with her entire independence.

These two things constitute the main charm of reading novels. Now, in as far as these are good and not spurious interests, let us see what we have to correspond with them in real life. Can high sympathies be fed upon the opera, the exhibitions, the gossip of the House of Commons, and the political caricature? If, together, man and woman approach any of the high questions of social, political, or religious life, they are said (and justly—under our present disqualifications) to be going "too far." That such things can be!

"Is it Thou, Lord?" And He said, "It is I." Let our hearts be still.

2

Yet I would spare no pang,
Would wish no torture less,
The more that anguish racks,
The earlier it will bless.[4]

Give us back our suffering, we cry to Heaven in our hearts—suffering rather than indifferentism; for out of nothing comes nothing.[5] But out of suffering may come the cure. Better have pain than paralysis! A hundred struggle and drown in the breakers. One discovers the new world. But rather, ten times rather, die in the surf, heralding the way to that new world, than stand idly on the shore!

3. Latin epic poem written c. A.D. 92 by Statius about a protracted military campaign against Thebes.

4. Possibly the words of an Evangelical hymn.

5. Cf. *King Lear* 1.1.90: "Nothing will come of nothing."

Passion, intellect, moral activity—these three have never been satisfied in woman. In this cold and oppressive conventional atmosphere, they cannot be satisfied. To say more on this subject would be to enter into the whole history of society, of the present state of civilization.

Look at that lizard—"It is not hot," he says, "I like it. The atmosphere which enervates you is life to me." The state of society which some complain of makes others happy. Why should these complain to those? *They* do not suffer. *They* would not understand it, any more than that lizard would comprehend the sufferings of a Shetland sheep.

The progressive world is necessarily divided into two classes—those who take the best of what there is and enjoy it—those who wish for something better and try to create it. Without these two classes, the world would be badly off. They are the very conditions of progress, both the one and the other. Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better. And, through the other class, which is constantly taking the best of what the first is creating for them, a balance is secured, and that which is conquered is held fast. But with neither class must we quarrel for not possessing the privileges of the other. The laws of the nature of each make it impossible.

Is discontent a privilege?

Yes, it is a privilege to suffer for your race—a privilege not reserved to the Redeemer and the martyrs alone, but one enjoyed by numbers in every age.

The common-place life of thousands; and in that is its only interest—its only merit as a history: viz., that it *is* the type of common sufferings—the story of one who has not the courage to resist nor to submit to the civilization of her time—is this.

Poetry and imagination begin life. A child will fall on its knees on the gravel walk at the sight of a pink hawthorn in full flower, when it is by itself, to praise God for it.

Then comes intellect. It wishes to satisfy the wants which intellect creates for it. But there is a physical, not moral, impossibility of supplying the wants of the intellect in the state of civilization at which we have arrived. The stimulus, the training, the time, are all three wanting to us; or, in other words, the means and inducements are not there.

Look at the poor lives which we lead. It is a wonder that we are so good as we are, not that we are so bad. In looking round we are struck with the power of the organizations we see, not with their want of power. Now and then, it is true, we are conscious that *there* is an inferior organization, but, in general, just the contrary. Mrs A. has the imagination, the poetry of a Murillo,[6] and has sufficient power of execution to show that she might have had a great deal more. Why is she not a Murillo? From a material difficulty, not a mental one. If she has a knife and fork in her hands during three hours of the day, she cannot have a pencil or brush. Dinner is the great sacred ceremony of this day, the great sacrament. To be absent from dinner is equivalent to being ill. Nothing else will excuse us from it. Bodily incapacity is the only apology valid. If she has a pen and ink in her hands during other three hours, writing answers for the penny post; again, she cannot have her pencil, and so *ad infinitum* through life. People have no type[7] before them in their lives, neither fathers and mothers, nor the children themselves. They look at things in detail. They say, "It is very desirable that A., my daughter, should go to such a party, should know such a lady, should sit by such a person." It is true. But what standard have they before

6. Bartoleme Murillo (1618–1682), Spanish painter.

7. Model.

them? of the nature and destination of man? The very words are rejected as pedantic. But might they not, at least, have a type in their minds that such an one might be a discoverer through her intellect, such another through her art, a third through her moral power?

Women often try one branch of intellect after another in their youth, *e.g.*, mathematics. But that, least of all, is compatible with the life of "society." It is impossible to follow up anything systematically. Women often long to enter some man's profession where they would find direction, competition (or rather opportunity of measuring the intellect with others), and, above all, time.

In those wise institutions, mixed as they are with many follies, which will last as long as the human race lasts, because they are adapted to the wants of the human race; those institutions which we call monasteries, and which, embracing much that is contrary to the laws of nature, are yet better adapted to the union of the life of action and that of thought than any other mode of life with which we are acquainted; in many such, four and a half hours, at least, are daily set aside for thought, rules are given for thought, training and opportunity afforded. Among us, there is no time appointed for this purpose, and the difficulty is that, in our social life, we must be always doubtful whether we ought not to be with somebody else or be doing something else.

Are men better off than women in this?

If one calls upon a friend in London and sees her son in the drawing-room, it strikes one as odd to find a young man sitting idling in his mother's drawing-room in the morning. For men, who are seen much in those haunts, there is no end of the epithets we have; "knights of the carpet," "drawing-room heroes," "ladies' men." But suppose we were to see a number of men in the morning sitting round a table in the drawing-room, looking at prints, doing worsted work, and reading little books, how we should laugh! A member of the House of Commons was once known to do worsted work. Of another man was said, "His only fault is that he is too good; he drives out with his mother every day in the carriage, and if he is asked anywhere he answers that he must dine with his mother, but, if she can spare him, he will come in to tea, and he does not come."

Now, why is it more ridiculous for a man than for a woman to do worsted work and drive out every day in the carriage? Why should we laugh if we were to see a parcel of men sitting round a drawing-room table in the morning, and think it all right if they were women?

Is man's time more valuable than woman's? or is the difference between man and woman this, that woman has confessedly nothing to do?

Women are never supposed to have any occupation of sufficient importance not to be interrupted, except "suckling their fools;"[8] and women themselves have accepted this, have written books to support it, and have trained themselves so as to consider whatever they do as not of such value to the world or to others, but that they can throw it up at the first "claim of social life." They have accustomed themselves to consider intellectual occupation as a merely selfish amusement, which it is their "duty" to give up for every trifler more selfish than themselves.

A young man (who was afterwards useful and known in his day and generation) when busy reading and sent for by his proud mother to shine in some morning visit, came; but, after it was over, he said, "Now, remember, this is not to happen again. I

8. In *Othello* the villain Iago says that a woman's role is merely "To suckle fools and chronicle small beer"—i.e., to nurse babies and keep track of trifling matters (2.1.159).

came that you might not think me sulky, but I shall not come again." But for a young woman to send such a message to her mother and sisters, how impertinent it would be! A woman of great administrative powers said that she never undertook anything which she "could not throw by at once, if necessary."

How do we explain then the many cases of women who have distinguished themselves in classics, mathematics, even in politics?

Widowhood, ill-health, or want of bread, these three explanations or excuses are supposed to justify a woman in taking up an occupation. In some cases, no doubt, an indomitable force of character will suffice without any of these three, but such are rare.

But see how society fritters away the intellects of those committed to her charge! It is said that society is necessary to sharpen the intellect. But what do we seek society for? It does sharpen the intellect, because it is a kind of *tour-de-force* to say something at a pinch,—unprepared and uninterested with any subject, to improvise something under difficulties. But what "go we out for to seek?" To take the chance of some one having something to say which we want to hear or of our finding something to say which *they* want to hear? You have a little to say, but not much. You often make a stipulation with some one else, "Come in ten minutes, for I shall not be able to find enough to spin out longer than that." You are not to talk of anything very interesting, for the essence of society is to prevent any long conversations and all *tête-à-têtes*.[9] "Glissez, n'appuyez pas"[1] is its very motto. The praise of a good "*maîtresse de maison*" consists in this, that she allows no one person to be too much absorbed in, or too long about, a conversation. She always recalls them to their "duty." People do not go into the company of their fellow-creatures for what would seem a very sufficient reason, namely, that they have something to say to them, or something that they want to hear from them; but in the vague hope that they may find something to say.

Then as to solitary opportunities. Women never have half an hour in all their lives (excepting before or after anybody is up in the house) that they can call their own, without fear of offending or of hurting some one. Why do people sit up so late, or, more rarely, get up so early? Not because the day is not long enough, but because they have "no time in the day to themselves."

If we do attempt to do anything in company, what is the system of literary exercise which we pursue? Everybody reads aloud out of their own book or newspaper—or, every five minutes, something is said. And what is it to be "read aloud to"? The most miserable exercise of the human intellect. Or rather, is it any exercise at all? It is like lying on one's back, with one's hands tied and having liquid poured down one's throat. Worse than that, because suffocation would immediately ensue and put a stop to this operation. But no suffocation would stop the other.

So much for the satisfaction of the intellect. Yet for a married woman in society, it is even worse. A married woman was heard to wish that she could break a limb that she might have a little time to herself. Many take advantage of the fear of "infection" to do the same.

It is a thing *so* accepted among women that they have nothing to do, that one woman has not the least scruple in saying to another, "I will come and spend the morning with you." And you would be thought quite surly and absurd, if you were to refuse it on the plea of occupation. Nay, it is thought a mark of amiability and affection, if you are "on such terms" that you can "come in" "any morning you please."

9. Private conversations (French).
1. Slide along, don't push (French); i.e., remain light and superficial rather than engage ideas seriously. *Maîtresse de maison* means housewife.

In a country house, if there is a large party of young people, "You will spend the morning with us," they say to the neighbours, "we will drive together in the afternoon," "to-morrow we will make an expedition, and we will spend the evening together." And this is thought friendly, and spending time in a pleasant manner. So women play through life. Yet time is the most valuable of all things. If they had come every morning and afternoon and robbed us of half-a-crown we should have had redress from the police. But it is laid down, that our time is of no value. If you offer a morning visit to a professional man, and say, "I will just stay an hour with you, if you will allow me, till so and so comes back to fetch me;" it costs him the earnings of an hour, and therefore he has a right to complain. But women have no right, because it is "*only* their time."

Women have no means given them, whereby they *can* resist the "claims of social life." They are taught from their infancy upwards that it is wrong, ill-tempered, and a misunderstanding of "woman's mission"[2] (with a great M.) if they do not allow themselves *willingly* to be interrupted at all hours. If a woman has once put in a claim to be treated as a man by some work of science or art or literature, which she can *show* as the "fruit of her leisure," then she will be considered justified in *having* leisure (hardly, perhaps, even then). But if not, not. If she has nothing to show, she must resign herself to her fate.

3

"I like riding about this beautiful place, why don't you? I like walking about the garden, why don't you?" is the common expostulation—as if we were children, whose spirits rise during a fortnight's holidays, who think that they will last for ever—and look neither backwards nor forwards.

Society triumphs over many. They wish to regenerate the world with their institutions, with their moral philosophy, with their love. Then they sink to living from breakfast till dinner, from dinner till tea, with a little worsted work, and to looking forward to nothing but bed.

When shall we see a life full of steady enthusiasm, walking straight to its aim, flying home, as that bird is now, against the wind—with the calmness and the confidence of one who knows the laws of God and can apply them?

What *do* we see? We see great and fine organizations deteriorating. We see girls and boys of seventeen, before whose noble ambitions, heroic dreams, and rich endowments we bow our heads, as before *God incarnate in the flesh*. But, ere they are thirty, they are withered, paralysed, extinguished. "We have forgotten our visions," they say themselves.

The "dreams of youth" have become a proverb. That organizations, early rich, fall far short of their promise has been repeated to satiety. But is it extraordinary that it should be so? For do we ever *utilize* this heroism? Look how it lives upon itself and perishes for lack of food. We do not know what to do with it. We had rather that it should not be there. Often we laugh at it. Always we find it troublesome. Look at the poverty of our life! Can we expect anything else but poor creatures to come out of it? Did Michael Angelo's genius fail, did Pascal's die in its bud, did Sir Isaac Newton become a common-place sort of man?[3] In two of these cases the knife wore out the sheath. But the knife itself did not become rusty, till the body was dead or infirm.

2. A popular book of this title was published in 1839 by Sarah Lewis.
3. Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), Italian Renaissance artist; Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), French philosopher and mathematician; Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), mathematician and scientist.

Why cannot we *make use* of the noble rising heroisms of our own day, instead of leaving them to rust?

They have nothing to do.

Are they to be employed in sitting in the drawing-room, saying words which may as well not be said, which could be said as well if *they* were not there?

Women often strive to live by intellect. The clear, brilliant, sharp radiance of intellect's moonlight rising upon such an expanse of snow is dreary, it is true, but some love its solemn desolation, its silence, its solitude—if they are but *allowed* to live in it; if they are not perpetually baulked and disappointed. But a woman cannot live in the light of intellect. Society forbids it. Those conventional frivolities, which are called her "duties," forbid it. Her "domestic duties," high-sounding words, which, for the most part, are but bad habits (which she has not the courage to enfranchise herself from, the strength to break through) forbid it. What are these duties (or bad habits)?—Answering a multitude of letters which lead to nothing, from her so-called friends—keeping herself up to the level of the world that she may furnish her quota of amusement at the breakfast-table; driving out her company in the carriage. And all these things are exacted from her by her family which if she is good and affectionate, will have more influence with her than the world.

What wonder if, wearied out, sick at heart with hope deferred, the springs of will broken, not seeing clearly *where* her duty lies, she abandons intellect as a vocation and takes it only, as we use the moon, by glimpses through her tight-closed window-shutters?

The family? It is too narrow a field for the development of an immortal spirit, be that spirit male or female. The chances are a thousand to one that, in that small sphere, the task for which that immortal spirit is destined by the qualities and the gifts which its Creator has placed within it, will not be found.

The family uses people, *not* for what they are, nor for what they are intended to be, but for what it wants them for—for its own uses. It thinks of them not as what God has made them, but as the something which *it* has arranged that they shall be. If it wants some one to sit in the drawing-room, *that* some one is to be supplied by the family, though that member may be destined for science, or for education, or for active superintendence by God, *i.e.*, by the gifts within.

This system dooms some minds to incurable infancy, others to silent misery.

And family boasts that it has performed its mission well, in as far as it has enabled the individual to say, "I have *no* peculiar work, nothing but what the moment brings me, nothing that I cannot throw up at once at anybody's claim;" in as far, that is, as it has *destroyed* the individual life. And the individual thinks that a great victory has been accomplished, when, at last, she is able to say that she has "no personal desires or plans." What is this but throwing the gifts of God aside as worthless, and substituting for them those of the world?

Marriage is the only chance (and it is but a chance) offered to women for escape from this death; and how eagerly and how ignorantly it is embraced!

At present we live to impede each other's satisfactions; competition, domestic life, society, what is it all but this? We go somewhere where we are not wanted and where we don't want to go. What else is conventional life? *Passivity* when we want to be active. So many hours spent every day in passively doing what conventional life tells us, when we would so gladly be at work.

And is it a wonder that all individual life is extinguished?

Women dream of a great sphere of steady, not sketchy benevolence, of moral activity, for which they would fain be trained and fitted, instead of working in the dark, neither knowing nor registering whither their steps lead, whether farther from or nearer to the aim.

For how do people exercise their moral activity now? We visit, we teach, we talk, among "the poor"; we are told, "don't look for the fruits, cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Certainly "don't look," for you won't see. You will *not* "find it," and then you would "strike work."

How different would be the heart for the work, and how different would be the success, if we learnt our work as a serious study, and followed it out steadily as a profession!

Were the physician to set to work at *his* trade, as the philanthropist does at his, how many bodies would he not spoil before he cured one!

We set the treatment of bodies so high above the treatment of souls, that the physician occupies a higher place in society than the school-master. The governess is to have every one of God's gifts; she is to do that which the mother herself is incapable of doing; but our son must not degrade himself by marrying the governess, nor our daughter the tutor, though she might marry the medical man.

But my medical man does do something for me, it is said, my tutor has done nothing.

This is true, this is the real reason. And what a condemnation of the state of mental science it is! Low as is physical science, that of the mind is still lower.

Women long for an education to teach them *to teach*, to teach them the laws of the human mind and how to apply them—and knowing how imperfect, in the present state of the world, such an education must be, they long for experience, not patch-work experience, but experience followed up and systematized, to enable them to know what they are about and *where* they are "casting their bread" and whether it *is* "*bread*" or a stone.

How should we learn a language if we were to give to it an hour a week? A fortnight's steady application would make more way in it than a year of such patch-work. A "lady" can hardly go to "her school" two days running. She cannot leave the breakfast-table—or she must be fulfilling some little frivolous "duty," which others ought not to exact, or which might just as well be done some other time.

Dreaming always—never accomplishing; thus women live—too much ashamed of their dreams, which they think "romantic," to tell them where they will be laughed at, even if not considered wrong.

With greater strength of purpose they might accomplish something. But if they were strong, all of them, they would not need to have their story told, for all the world would read it in the mission they have fulfilled. It is for common place, every-day characters that we tell our tale—because it is the sample of hundreds of lives (or rather deaths) of persons who cannot fight with society, or who, unsupported by the sympathies about them, give up their own destiny as not worth the fierce and continued struggle necessary to accomplish it. *One* struggle they *could* make and be free (and, in the Church of Rome, many, many, unallured by any other motive, make this one struggle to enter a convent); but the perpetual series of petty spars, with discouragements between, and doubts as to whether they are right—these wear out the very life necessary to make them.

If a man were to follow up his profession or occupation at odd times, how would he do it? Would he become skilful in that profession? It is acknowledged by women themselves that they are inferior in every occupation to men. Is it wonderful? *They* do *everything* at "odd times."

And if a woman's music and drawing are only used by her as an amusement (a *pass-time*, as it is called), is it wonderful that she tires of them, that she becomes disgusted with them?

In every dream of the life of intelligence or that of activity, women are accompanied by a phantom—the phantom of sympathy, guiding, lighting the way—even if they do not marry. Some few sacrifice marriage, because they must sacrifice all other life if they accept that. That man and woman have an equality of duties and rights is accepted by woman even less than by man. Behind *his* destiny woman must annihilate herself, must be only his complement. A woman dedicates herself to the vocation of her husband; she fills up and performs the subordinate parts in it. But if she has any destiny, any vocation of her own, she must renounce it, in nine cases out of ten. Some few, like Mrs Somerville, Mrs Chisholm, Mrs Fry,[4] have not done so; but these are exceptions. The fact is that woman has so seldom any vocation of her own, that it does not much signify; she has none to renounce. A man gains everything by marriage: he gains a "help-mate," but a woman does not.

But if ever women come into contact with sickness, and crime, and poverty in masses, how the practical reality of life revives them! They are exhausted, like those who live on opium or on novels, all their lives—exhausted with feelings which lead to no action. If they see and enter into a continuous line of action, with a full and interesting life, with training constantly kept up to the occupation, occupation constantly testing the training—it is the *beau-idéal* of practical, not theoretical, education—they are re-tempered, their life is filled, they have found their work, and the means to do it.

Women, when they are young, sometimes think that an actress's life is a happy one—not for the sake of the admiration, not for the sake of the fame; but because in the morning she studies, in the evening she embodies those studies: she has the means of testing and correcting them by practice, and of resuming her studies in the morning, to improve the weak parts, remedy the failures, and in the evening try the corrections again. It is, indeed, true that, even after middle age, with such exercise of faculty, there is no end to the progress which may be made.

Some are only deterred from suicide because it is in the most distinct manner to say to God: "I will not, I will not do as Thou wouldst have me," and because it is "no use."

To have no food for our heads, no food for our hearts, no food for our activity, is that nothing? If we have no food for the body, how we do cry out, how all the world hears of it, how all the newspapers talk of it, with a paragraph headed in great capital letters, DEATH FROM STARVATION! But suppose one were to put a paragraph in the "Times," *Death of Thought from Starvation*, or *Death of Moral Activity from Starvation*, how people would stare, how they would laugh and wonder! One would think we had no heads nor hearts, by the total indifference of the public towards them. Our bodies are the only things of any consequence.

We have nothing to do which raises us, no food which agrees with us. We can never pursue any object for a single two hours, for we can never command any regular leisure or solitude; and in social or domestic life one is bound, under pain of being thought sulky, to make a remark every two minutes.

Men are on the side of society; they blow hot and cold; they say, "Why can't you employ yourself in society?" and then, "Why don't you talk in society?" I can pursue a connected conversation, or I can be silent; but to drop a remark, as it is called, every

4. Mary Somerville (1780–1872), scientist; Caroline Chisholm (1808–1877), philanthropist who helped emigrants to settle in Australia; Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845), philanthropist and prison reformer.

two minutes, how wearisome it is! It is impossible to pursue the current of one's own thoughts, because one must keep oneself ever on the alert "to say something;" and it is impossible to say what one is thinking, because the essence of a remark is not to be a thought, but an impression. With what labour women have toiled to break down all individual and independent life, in order to fit themselves for this social and domestic existence, thinking it right! And when they have killed themselves to do it, they have awakened (too late) to think it wrong.

For, later in life, women could not make use of leisure and solitude if they had it! Like the Chinese woman, who could not make use of her feet, if she were brought into European life.

Some have an attention like a battering-ram, which, slowly brought to bear, can work upon a subject for any length of time. They can work ten hours just as well as two upon the same thing. But this age would have men like the musket, which you can load so fast that nothing but its heating in the process puts any limit to the number and frequency of times of firing, and at as many different objects as you please.

So, later in life, people cannot use their battering-ram. Their attention, like society's, goes off in a thousand different directions. They are an hour before they can fix it; and by the time it is fixed, the leisure is gone. They become incapable of consecutive or strenuous work.

What these suffer—even physically—from the want of such work no one can tell. The accumulation of nervous energy, which has had nothing to do during the day, makes them feel every night, when they go to bed, as if they were going mad; and they are obliged to lie long in bed in the morning to let it evaporate and keep it down.

At last they suffer at once from disgust of the one and incapacity for the other—from loathing of conventional idleness and powerlessness to do work when they have it. "Now go, you have several hours," say people, "you have all the afternoon to yourself." When they are all frittered away, they are to begin to work. When they are broken up into little bits, they are to hew away.

4

Moral activity? There is scarcely such a thing possible! Everything is sketchy. The world does nothing but sketch. One Lady Bountiful sketches a school, but it never comes to a finished study; she can hardly work at it two weeks consecutively. Here and there a solitary individual, it is true, makes a really careful study,—as Mrs Chisholm of emigration—as Miss Carpenter of reformatory discipline.[5] But, in general, a "lady" has too many sketches on hand. She has a sketch of society, a sketch of her children's education, sketches of her "charities," sketches of her reading. She is like a painter who should have five pictures in his studio at once, and giving now a stroke to one, and now a stroke to another, till he had made the whole round, should continue this routine to the end.

All life is sketchy,—the poet's verse (compare Tennyson, Milnes, and Mrs Browning[6] with Milton or even Byron: it is not the difference of genius which strikes one so much as the unfinished state of these modern sketches compared with the studies of the old masters),—the artist's picture, the author's composition—all are rough, imperfect, incomplete, even as works of art.

5. Mary Carpenter (1807–1892), philanthropist who promoted reformatory schools.

6. Three contemporary poets; Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–1885) had proposed to Nightingale and been turned down.

And how can it be otherwise? A "leader" out of a newspaper, an article out of a review, five books read aloud in the course of an evening, such is our literature. What mind can stand three leading articles every morning as its food?

When shall we see a woman making a *study* of what she does? Married women cannot; for a man would think, if his wife undertook any great work with the intention of carrying it out,—of making anything but a sham of it—that she would "suckle his fools and chronicle his small beer" less well for it,—that he would not have so good a dinner—that she would destroy, as it is called, his domestic life.

The intercourse of man and woman—how frivolous, how unworthy it is! Can we call *that* the true vocation of woman—her high career? Look round at the marriages which you know. The true marriage—that noble union, by which a man and woman become together the one perfect being—probably does not exist at present upon earth.

It is not surprising that husbands and wives seem so little part of one another. It is surprising that there is so much love as there is. For there is no food for it. What does it live upon—what nourishes it? Husbands and wives never seem to have anything to say to one another. What do they talk about? Not about any great religious, social, political questions or feelings. They talk about who shall come to dinner, who is to live in this lodge and who in that, about the improvement of the place, or when they shall go to London. If there are children, they form a common subject of some nourishment. But, even then, the case is oftenest thus,—the husband is to think of how they are to get on in life; the wife of bringing them up at home.

But any real communion between husband and wife—any descending into the depths of their being, and drawing out thence what they find and comparing it—do we ever dream of such a thing? Yes, we may dream of it during the season of "passion"; but we shall not find it afterwards. We even *expect* it to go off, and lay our account that it will. If the husband has, by chance, gone into the depths of *his* being, and found anything there unorthodox, he, oftenest, conceals it carefully from his wife,—he is afraid of "unsettling her opinions."

What is the mystery of passion, spiritually speaking? For there *is* a passion of the Spirit. *Blind* passion, as it has most truly been called, seems to come on in man without his exactly knowing why, without his *at all* knowing why for *this* person rather than for *that*, and (whether it has been satisfied or unsatisfied) to go off again after a while, as it came, also without his knowing why.

The woman's passion is generally more lasting.

It is possible that this difference may be, because there is really more in man than in woman. There is nothing in her for him to have this intimate communion *with*. He cannot impart to her his religious beliefs, if he have any, because she would be "shocked." Religious men are and must be heretics now—for we must not pray, except in a "form" of words, made beforehand—or think of God but with a prearranged idea.

With the man's political ideas, if they extend beyond the merest party politics, she has no sympathy.

His social ideas, if they are "advanced," she will probably denounce without knowing why, as savouring of "socialism" (a convenient word, which covers a multitude of new ideas and offences). For woman is "by birth a Tory,"—has been often said—by education a "Tory," we mean.

Woman has nothing but her affections,—and this makes her at once more loving and less loved.

But is it surprising that there should be so little real marriage, when we think what the process is which leads to marriage?

Under the eyes of an always present mother and sisters (of whom even the most refined and intellectual cannot abstain from a jest upon the subject, who think it their *duty* to be anxious, to watch every germ and bud of it) the acquaintance begins. It is fed—upon what?—the gossip of art, musical and pictorial, the party politics of the day, the chit-chat of society, and people marry or sometimes they don't marry, discouraged by the impossibility of knowing any more of one another than this will furnish.

They prefer to marry in *thought*, to hold imaginary conversations with one another in idea, rather than, on such a flimsy pretext of communion, to take the chance (*certainty* it cannot be) of having more to say to one another in marriage.

Men and women meet now *to be idle*. Is it extraordinary that they do not know each other, and that, in their mutual ignorance, they form no surer friendships? Did they meet to *do* something together, then indeed they might form some real tie.

But, as it is, *they* are not there, it is only a mask which is there—a mouth-piece of ready-made sentences about the "topics of the day;" and then people rail against men for choosing a woman "for her face"—why, what else do they see?

It is very well to say "be prudent, be careful, try to know each other." But how are you to know each other?

Unless a woman has lost all pride, how is it possible for her, under the eyes of all her family, to indulge in long exclusive conversations with a man? "Such a thing" must not take place till after her "engagement." And how is she to make an engagement, if "such a thing" has not taken place?

Besides, young women at home have so little to occupy and to interest them—they have so little reason for *not* quitting their home, that a young and independent man cannot look at a girl without giving rise to "expectations," if not on her own part, on that of her family. Happy he, if he is not said to have been "trifling with her feelings," or "disappointing her hopes!" Under these circumstances, how can a man, who has any pride or any principle, become acquainted with a woman in such a manner as to *justify* them in marrying?

There are four ways in which people marry. First, accident or relationship has thrown them together in their childhood, and acquaintance has grown up naturally and unconsciously. Accordingly, in novels, it is generally cousins who marry; and *now* it seems the only natural thing—the only possible way of making an intimacy. And yet, we know that intermarriage between relations is in direct contravention of the laws of nature for the well-being of the race; witness the Quakers, the Spanish grandees, the royal races, the secluded valleys of mountainous countries, where madness, degeneration of race, defective organization and cretinism flourish and multiply.

The second way, and by far the most general, in which people marry, is this. A woman, thoroughly uninterested at home, and having formed a slight acquaintance with some accidental person, accepts him, if he "falls in love" with her, as it is technically called, and takes the chance. Hence the vulgar expression of marriage being a lottery, which it most truly is, for that the *right* two should come together has as many chances against it as there are blanks in any lottery.

The third way is, that some person is found sufficiently independent, sufficiently careless of the opinions of others, or sufficiently without modesty to speculate thus:—"It is worth while that I should become acquainted with so and so. I do not care what his or her opinion of me is, if, *after* having become acquainted, to do which can bear no other construction in people's eyes than a desire of marriage, I retreat." But there

is this to be said, that it is doubtful whether, under this unnatural tension, which, to all susceptible characters, such a disregard of the opinions which they care for must be, a healthy or a natural feeling can grow up.

And now they are married—that is to say, two people have received the licence of a man in a white surplice. But they are no more man and wife for that than Louis XIV and the Infanta of Spain, married by proxy, were man and wife. The woman who has sold herself for an establishment, in what is she superior to those we may not name?

Lastly, in a few rare, very rare, cases, such as circumstances, always provided in novels, but seldom to be met with in real life, present—whether the accident of parents' neglect, or of parents' unusual skill and wisdom, or of having no parents at all, which is generally the case in novels—or marrying out of the person's rank of life, by which the usual restraints are removed, and there is room and play left for attraction—or extraordinary events, isolation, misfortunes, which many wish for, even though their imaginations be not tainted by romance-reading; such alternatives as these give food and space for the development of character and mutual sympathies.

But a girl, if she has any pride, is so ashamed of having any thing she wishes to say out of the hearing of her own family, she thinks it must be something so very wrong, that it is ten to one, if she have the opportunity of saying it, that she will not.

And yet she is spending her life, perhaps, in dreaming of accidental means of unrestrained communion.

And then it is thought pretty to say that "Women have no passion." If passion is excitement in the daily social intercourse with men, women think about marriage much more than men do; it is the only event of their lives. It ought to be a sacred event, but surely not the only event of a woman's life, as it is now. Many women spend their lives in asking men to marry them, in a refined way. Yet it is true that women are seldom in love. How can they be?

How cruel are the revulsions which high-minded women suffer! There was one who loved, in connexion with great deeds, noble thoughts, devoted feelings. They met after an interval. It was at one of those crowded parties of Civilization which we call Society. His only careless passing remark was, "The buzz to-night is like a manufactory."[7] Yet he loved her.

5

"L'enthousiasme est la faiblesse d'un temps où l'intelligence monte très haut, entrainée par l'imagination, et tombe très bas, écrasée par une réalité, sans poésie et sans grandeur."[8]

Women dream till they have no longer the strength to dream; those dreams against which they so struggle, so honestly, vigorously, and conscientiously, and so in vain, yet which are their life, without which they could not have lived; those dreams go at last. All their plans and visions seem vanished, and they know not where; gone, and they cannot recall them. They do not even remember them. And they are left without the food either of reality or of hope.

7. Apparently Milnes said something like this to Nightingale when they met at a party after she had refused his proposal.

8. Enthusiasm is the weakness of an age during which intelligence soars, swept along by the imagination, and then plummets, crushed by a reality without poetry and without grandeur (French).

Later in life, they neither desire nor dream, neither of activity, nor of love, nor of intellect. The last often survives the longest. They wish, if their experiences would benefit anybody, to give them to some one. But they never find an hour free in which to collect their thoughts, and so discouragement becomes ever deeper and deeper, and they less and less capable of undertaking anything.

It seems as if the female spirit of the world were mourning everlastingly over blessings, *not* lost, but which she has never had, and which, in her discouragement, she feels that she never will have, they are so far off.

The more complete a woman's organization, the more she will feel it, till at last there shall arise a woman, who will resume, in her own soul, all the sufferings of her race, and that woman will be the Saviour of her race.

Jesus Christ raised women above the condition of mere slaves, mere ministers to the passions of the man, raised them by his sympathy, to be ministers of God. He gave them moral activity. But the Age, the World, Humanity, must give them the means to exercise this moral activity, must give them intellectual cultivation, spheres of action.

There is perhaps no century where the woman shows so meanly as in this.[9] Because her education seems entirely to have parted company with her vocation; there is no longer unity between the woman as inwardly developed, and as outwardly manifested.

In the last century it was not so. In the succeeding one let us hope that it will no longer be so.

But now she is like the Archangel Michael as he stands upon Saint Angelo at Rome. She has an immense provision of wings, which seem as if they would bear her over earth and heaven; but when she tries to use them, she is petrified into stone, her feet are grown into the earth, chained to the bronze pedestal.

Nothing can well be imagined more painful than the present position of woman, unless, on the one hand, she renounces all outward activity and keeps herself within the magic sphere, the bubble of her dreams; or, on the other, surrendering all aspiration, she gives herself to her real life, soul and body. For those to whom it is possible, the latter is best; for out of activity may come thought, out of mere aspiration can come nothing.

But now—when the young imagination is so high and so developed, and reality is so narrow and conventional—there is no more parallelism between life in the thought and life in the actual than between the corpse, which lies motionless in its narrow bed, and the spirit, which, in our imagination, is at large among the stars.

The ideal life is passed in noble schemes of good consecutively followed up, of devotion to a great object, of sympathy given and received for high ideas and generous feelings. The actual life is passed in sympathy given and received for a dinner, a party, a piece of furniture, a house built or a garden laid out well, in devotion to your guests—(a too real devotion, for it implies that of all your time)—in schemes of schooling for the poor, which you follow up perhaps in an odd quarter of an hour, between luncheon and driving out in the carriage—broth and dripping are included in the plan—and the rest of your time goes in ordering the dinner, hunting for a governess for your children, and sending pheasants and apples to your poorer relations. Is

9. At almost every period of social life, we find, as it were, two under currents running different ways. There is the noble woman who dreams [of] following out her useful vocation; but there is also the selfish dreamer now, who is ever turning to something new, regardless of the expectations she has voluntarily excited, who is ever talking about "making a life for herself," heedless that she is spoiling another life, undertaken, perhaps, at her own bidding. This is the ugly reverse of the medal [Nightingale's note].

there anything in *this* life which can be called an Incarnation of the ideal life within? Is it a wonder that the unhappy woman should prefer to keep them entirely separate? not to take the bloom off her Ideal by mixing it up with her Actual; not to make her Actual still more unpalatable by trying to *inform* it with her Ideal? And then she is blamed, and her own sex unites against her, for not being content with the "day of small things." She is told that "trifles make the sum of human things;" they do indeed. She is contemptuously asked, "Would she abolish domestic life?" Men are afraid that their houses will not be so comfortable, that their wives will make themselves "remarkable"—women, that they will make themselves distasteful to men; they write books (and very wisely) to teach themselves to dramatize "little things," to persuade themselves that "domestic life is their sphere" and to idealize the "sacred hearth."[1] Sacred it is indeed. Sacred from the touch of their sons almost as soon as they are out of childhood—from its dulness and its tyrannous trifling *these* recoil. Sacred from the grasp of their daughters' affections, upon which it has so light a hold that they seize the first opportunity of marriage, *their* only chance of emancipation. The "sacred hearth;" sacred to their husband's sleep, their sons' absence in the body and their daughters' in mind.

Oh! mothers, who talk about this hearth, how much do you know of your sons' real life, how much of your daughters' imaginary one? Awake, ye women, all ye that sleep, awake! If this domestic life were so very good, would your young men wander away from it, your maidens think of something else?

The time is come when women must do something more than the "domestic hearth," which means nursing the infants, keeping a pretty house, having a good dinner and an entertaining party.

You say, "It is true, our young men see visions, and our maidens dream dreams, but what of? Does not the woman intend to marry, and have over again what she has at home? and the man ultimately too?" Yes, but not the same; she *will* have the same, that is, if circumstances are not altered to prevent it; but her *idéal* is very different, though that *idéal* and the reality will never come together to mould each other. And it is not only the unmarried woman who dreams. The married woman also holds long imaginary conversations but too often.

6

We live in the world, it is said, and must walk in its ways.

Was Christ called a complainer against the world? Yet all these great teachers and preachers, must have had a most deep and ingrained sense, a continual gnawing feeling of the miseries and wrongs of the world. Otherwise they would not have been impelled to devote life and death to redress them. Christ, Socrates, Howard,[2] they must have had no ear for the joys, compared to that which they had for the sorrows of the world.

They acted, however, and we complain. The great reformers of the world turn into the great misanthropists, if circumstances or organisation do not permit them to act. Christ, if He had been a woman, might have been nothing but a great complainer. Peace be with the misanthropists! They have made a step in progress; the next will make them great philanthropists; they are divided but by a line.

1. A reference to female conduct books, such as those by Sarah Stickney Ellis. See page 1606.

2. John Howard (1726–1790), philanthropist and prison reformer.

The next Christ will perhaps be a female Christ. But do we see one woman who looks like a female Christ? or even like "the messenger before" her "face," to go before her and prepare the hearts and minds for her?

To this will be answered that half the inmates of Bedlam[3] begin in this way, by fancying that they are "the Christ."[4]

People talk about imitating Christ, and imitate Him in the little trifling formal things, such as washing the feet, saying his prayer, and so on; but if any one attempts the real imitation of Him, there are no bounds to the outcry with which the presumption of that person is condemned.

For instance, Christ was saying something to the people one day, which interested Him very much, and interested them very much; and Mary and his brothers came in the middle of it, and wanted to interrupt Him, and take Him home to dinner, very likely—(how natural that story is! does it not speak more home than any historic evidences of the Gospel's reality?), and He, instead of being angry with their interruption of Him in such an important work for some trifling thing, answers, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."[5] But if *we* were to say that, we should be accused of "destroying the family tie," of "diminishing the obligation of the home duties."

He might well say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."[6] His words will never pass away. If He had said, "Tell them that I am engaged at this moment in something very important; that the instruction of the multitude ought to go before any personal ties; that I will remember to come when I have done," no one would have been impressed by His words; but how striking is that, "Behold my mother and my brethren!"

7

The dying woman to her mourners:[7]—"Oh! if you knew how gladly I leave this life, how much more courage I feel to take the chance of another, than of anything I see before me in this, you would put on your wedding-clothes instead of mourning for me!"

"But," they say, "so much talent! so many gifts! such good which you might have done!"

"The world will be put back some little time by my death," she says; "you see I estimate my powers at least as highly as you can; but it is by the death which has taken place some years ago in me, not by the death which is about to take place now." And so is the world put back by the death of every one who has to sacrifice the development of his or her peculiar gifts (which were meant, not for selfish gratification, but for the improvement of that world) to conventionality.

3. London lunatic asylum.

4. It is quite true that insanity, sensuality, and monstrous fraud have constantly assumed to be "the Christ," *vide* the *Agapemone*, and the Mormons. "Believing" a man of the name of Prince "to be the tabernacle of God on earth," poor deluded women transfer to him all their stock in the Three per Cents. We hear of the Mormons, &c., being the "recipients and mouth-pieces of God's spirit." They profess to be "incarnations of the Deity," "witnesses of the Almighty, solely knowing God's will, and being the medium of communicating it to man," and so forth. It does not appear to us that this blasphemy is very dangerous to the cause of true religion in general, any more than forgery is very dangerous to commerce in general. It is the universal dishonesty in religion, as in trade, which is really dangerous [Nightingale's note]. The Church of the Agapemone was founded in an English village in 1849 by H. J. Prince, who claimed to be the personification of the Holy Ghost, but the sect was discovered to be engaging in promiscuous and immoral behavior.

5. Matthew 12.46–50.

6. Matthew 24.35.

7. Cassandra, who can neither find happiness in life, nor alter it, dies [Nightingale's note].

"My people were like children playing on the shore of the eighteenth century. I was their hobby-horse, their plaything; and they drove me to and fro, dear souls! never weary of the play themselves, till I, who had grown to woman's estate and to the ideas of the nineteenth century, lay down exhausted, my mind closed to hope, my heart to strength.

"Free—free—oh! divine freedom, art thou come at last? Welcome, beautiful death!"

Let neither name nor date be placed on her grave, still less the expression of regret or of admiration; but simply the words, "I believe in God."

1852; 1859 1928

PERSPECTIVES

Victorian Ladies and Gentlemen

As Victorian society prospered, social divisions became more fluid, but at the same time class consciousness became more intense. The terms "lady" and "gentleman" had enormous significance, particularly for those aspiring to these ranks, or for those in danger of slipping out of them. Some social distinctions were obvious: regardless of conduct, people born into the aristocracy and landed gentry were indisputably ladies and gentlemen; people who worked with their hands in home, field, or factory were not. The upper and lower boundaries of the middle-class were blurred, however, and everyone was alert to fine gradations. Manners, money, birth, occupation, and leisure time were crucial indicators of social standing, determining not only one's place in society but one's freedom to act, speak, learn, and earn.

Ladies and gentlemen endeavored to conform to the ideology of separate spheres that dominated Victorian thinking about gender. Middle-class women were to preside over the domestic sphere, the home and family, while men entered the fray of the world. Woman's "mission" was to provide a sanctified haven from the rough-and-tumble world of business and politics. Her virtuous passivity, selflessness, and spiritual purity gave her moral authority in the social and domestic realm. The first mass circulation women's periodical, launched in 1852, was called, significantly, *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*.

Meanwhile, the world of action and aggression belonged to men: as Ruskin put it in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865): "The man, in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril and trial . . . often he must be wounded, or subdued, often misled; and *always* hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her . . . need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense." Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847) gave the polarization of gender roles the aura of timeless law:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey:
> All else confusion.

Among middle-class men, the clearest social division was between those who had attended a public school (an elite boarding school) and those who had not. The ideal of gentlemanliness inculcated by these schools became a way for society to remake the upstart middle classes in the image of the aristocracy. Emphasizing character over intellect, the public schools taught boys how to assimilate the manners and customs of those above them socially, and gave them a familiarity with Greek, Latin, and school games such as cricket and rugby—hallmarks of an upper-class education. Instilling the values of duty, loyalty, and public service, these schools helped to create a new administrative elite, based more on merit and

Father of the Family. "COME, DEAR; WE SO SELDOM GO OUT TOGETHER NOW—CAN'T YOU TAKE US ALL TO THE PLAY TO-NIGHT?"

Mistress of House, and M. P. "HOW YOU TALK, CHARLES! DON'T YOU SEE THAT I AM TOO BUSY. I HAVE A COMMITTEE TO-MORROW MORNING, AND I HAVE MY SPEECH ON THE GREAT CROCHET QUESTION TO PREPARE FOR THE EVENING."

The Parliamentary Female. From *Punch* magazine, 1853.

training than birth, who ran both the Civil Service and the Empire. Sustained by the "old boy" network, in which former schoolmates assisted each other's careers, graduates of places such as Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and Rugby could look forward to positions of influence and affluence.

Although the daughters of some well-to-do families might attend a fashionable boarding school (satirized in E. Nesbit's short story *Fortunatus Rex & Co.* on page 1510), education was not primarily what determined a woman's claim to be considered a lady. Her position derived from her parents or her husband, and her unproductive leisure was a visible signal of rank. Since aspirations to "refinement" effectively precluded middle-class women from employment, ladies had, as the novelist Dinah Maria Mulock put it in 1858, "literally nothing whatever to do." She complained that "their whole energies are devoted to the massacre of old Time. They prick him to death with crochet and embroidery needles; strum him deaf with piano and harp playing—*not* music; cut him up with morning visitors, or leave his carcass in ten-minute parcels at every 'friend's' house they can think of." In her autobiography Harriet Martineau described the expectations in her day: "It was not thought proper for young ladies to study very conspicuously. . . . If ever I shut myself into my own room for an hour of solitude, I knew it was at the risk of being sent for to join the sewing-circle, or to read aloud."

It was a way of life that at once exalted women and paralyzed them. They could not work outside the home; they could not vote; they had no legal rights, even over their own children; they could not attend university or enter the professions. Legally, they were classed with criminals, idiots, and minors. Rejecting women's education, the painter Edward Burne-Jones

argued, "The great point is, not that they should understand us, but that they should worship and obey us." Ironically, only economic necessity or illness could liberate a lady from the burden of enforced idleness. When Martineau's family went bankrupt she was enabled to pursue her dream of authorship, for "we had lost our gentility." Similarly, the death of both parents freed Mary Kingsley to travel, and her own recurrent ill-health allowed Isabella Bird to go off in search of a "cure." (See Perspectives: Travel and Empire, page 1832). Florence Nightingale made time for a career by taking to her bed, where only her persistent indisposition released her from the demands of family and social life. Definitions of masculinity and femininity were earnestly contested throughout the period—with increasingly sharp assaults on traditional roles coming from aesthetes and decadents at the end of the century. The following selections illustrate the kinds of arguments and experiences that figured prominently in debates on gender roles in the early and mid-Victorian periods.

"The Comparison."

Where she succeeds with cloudless brow,
  In common and in holy course,
He fails, in spite of prayer and vow
  And agonies of faith and force;
Or, if his suit with Heaven prevails
  To righteous life, his virtuous deeds
Lack beauty, virtue's badge; she fails
  More graciously than he succeeds.
Her spirit, compact of gentleness,
  If Heaven postpones or grants her pray'r,
Conceives no pride in its success,
  And in its failure no despair;
But his, enamour'd of its hurt,
  Baffled, blasphemes, or, not denied,
Crows from the dunghill of desert,
  And wags its ugly wings for pride.
He's never young nor ripe; she grows
  More infantine, auroral, mild,
And still the more she lives and knows
  The lovelier she's express'd a child.
Say that she wants the will of man
  To conquer fame, not check'd by cross,
Nor moved when others bless or ban;
  She wants but what to have were loss.
Or say she wants the patient brain
  To track shy truth; her facile wit
At that which he hunts down with pain
  Flies straight, and does exactly hit.
Were she but half of what she is,
  He twice himself, mere love alone,
Her special crown, as truth is his,
  Gives title to the worthier throne;
For love is substance, truth the form;
  Truth without love were less than nought;
But blindest love is sweet and warm.
  And full of truth not shaped by thought;
And therefore in herself she stands
  Adorn'd with undeficient grace,
Her happy virtues taking hands,
  Each smiling in another's face.
So dancing round the Tree of Life,
  They make an Eden in her breast,
While his, disjointed and at strife,
  Proud-thoughted, do not bring him rest.[3]

Sahara

PRELUDE

The Wife's Tragedy

Man must be pleased; but him to please
  Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
  She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought! and yokes
  Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
  Another, not from her, but him;
While she, too gentle even to force
  His penitence by kind replies,
Waits by, expecting his remorse,
  With pardon in her pitying eyes;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
  A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
  And seems to think the sin was hers;
And whilst his love has any life,
  Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
  Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire;
  And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love flames higher,
  As grass grows taller round a stone.

From Coventry Patmore's
The Angel in the House
book of poems
(1854 – 1862)

The Morning Call

PRELUDE

The Rose of the World

Lo, when the Lord made North and South
  And sun and moon ordained, He,
Forthbringing each by word of mouth
  In order of its dignity,
Did man from the crude clay express
  By sequence, and, all else decreed,
He form'd the woman; nor might less
  Than Sabbath such a work succeed.
And still with favour singled out,
  Marr'd less than man by mortal fall,
Her disposition is devout,
  Her countenance angelical;
The best things that the best believe
  Are in her face so kindly writ
The faithless, seeing her, conceive,
  Not only heaven, but hope of it;

No idle thought her instinct shrouds,
  But fancy chequers settled sense,
Like alteration of the clouds
  On noonday's azure permanence;
Pure dignity, composure, ease,
  Declare affections nobly fix'd,
And impulse sprung from due degrees
  Of sense and spirit sweetly mix'd;
Her modesty, her chiefest grace,
  The cestus clasping Venus's side,
Is potent to deject the face
  Of him who would affront its pride;
Wrong dares not in her presence speak,
  Nor spotted thought its taint disclose
Under the protest of a cheek
  Outbragging Nature's boast the rose.
In mind and manners how discreet!
  How artless in her very art;
How candid in discourse; how sweet
  The concord of her lips and heart;
How simple and how circumspect;
  How subtle and how fancy-free;
Though sacred to her love, how deck'd
  With unexclusive courtesy;
How quick in talk to see from far
  The way to vanquish or evade;
How able her persuasions are
  To prove, her reasons to persuade;
How, (not to call true instinct's bent
  And woman's very nature, harm,)
How amiable and innocent
  Her pleasure in her power to charm;
How humbly careful to attract,
  Though crown'd with all the soul

THE KOH-I-NOOR

'Be man's hard virtues highly wrought,
But let my gentle Mistress be,
In every look, word, deed, and thought,
Nothing but sweet and womanly!'
Her virtues please my virtuous mood,
But what at all times I admire
Is, not that she is wise or good,
But just the thing which I desire.

PATMORE'S Angel in the House Cont'd.

THE WEDDING

Life smitten with a feverish chill,
The brain too tired to understand,
In apathy of heart and will,
I took the woman from the hand
Of him who stood for God, and heard
Of Christ, and of the Church his Bride;
The Feast, by presence of the Lord
And his first Wonder, beautified;
The mystic sense to Christian men;
The bonds in innocency made,
And gravely to be enter'd then
For children, godliness, and aid,
And honour'd, and kept free from smirch;
And how a man must love his wife

No less than Christ did love his Church,
If need be, giving her his life;
And, vowing then the mutual vow,
The tongue spake, but intention slept.
'Tis well for us Heaven asks not how
This oath is sworn, but how 'tis kept.

O, bold seal of a bashful bond,
Which makes the marriage-day to be,
To those before it and beyond,
An ice-berg in an Indian sea!

'Now, while she's changing,' said the Dean,
'Her bridal for her travelling dress,
I'll preach allegiance to your queen!
Preaching's the trade which I profess;
And one more minute's mine! You know
I've paid my girl a father's debt,
And this last charge is all I owe.
She's yours; but I love more than yet
You can; such fondness only wakes
When time has raised the heart above
The prejudice of youth, which makes
Beauty conditional to love.
Prepare to meet the weak alarms
Of novel nearness; recollect
The eye which magnifies her charms
Is microscopic for defect.
Fear comes at first; but soon, rejoiced,
You'll find your strong and tender love
Like holy rocks by Druids poised,
The least force shakes, but none removes.
Although you smile, there's much to mend!
Yet never girl, I think, had less.
Her worst point is, she's apt to spend
Too much on alms-deeds and on dress.
Her strength is your esteem; beware
Of finding fault; her will's unnerv'd
By blame; from you 'twould be despair;
But praise that is not quite deserv'd
Will all her noble nature move
To make your utmost wishes true.
Yet think, while mending thus your Love
Of matching her ideal too!
The death of nuptial joy is sloth:
To keep your mistress in your wife,

Chaque homme porte en lui un monde composé de tout ce qu'il a vu et aimé, et où il rentre sans cesse, alors même qu'il parcourt et semble habiter un monde étranger.
—*Chateaubriand,* VOYAGES EN ITALIE

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INTRODUCTION

THE FORMAL END OF EUROPEAN COLONIALISM DURing the latter half of the twentieth century has in more recent years given rise to a new range of studies devoted to reexamining the history, politics, psychology, and language of colonization. Within the field of literary study alone, scholars have experienced a major paradigm shift in which literary works once studied primarily as expressions of traditionally Western ideals are now also read as evidence of the manner in which such ideals have served in the historical process of colonization. The particular languages which belong to this process, enabling it while simultaneously being generated by it, are known collectively as colonial discourse.

In the following chapters I propose to identify the basic rhetorical features of this discourse and to study the way in which it has been deployed, both in the modern period of European colonialism (roughly 1870–1960), as well as in the more recent period of decolonization. My study, which draws its examples primarily from British, French, and American writing of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, offers a general introduction to modern European colonial discourse, rather than focusing on a more narrowly defined historical moment or geographical area; it emphasizes rhetorical analysis rather than historical narrative; and while borrowing from the language of contemporary literary theory, it carries this analysis beyond the boundaries of literature into other forms of writing.

In the course of this study, it will become clear that what we call colonial discourse is neither a monolithic system nor a finite set of texts; it may more accurately be described as the name for a series of colonizing discourses, each adapted to a specific historical situation, yet having in common cer-

tain elements with the others. This series is marked by internal repetition, but not by all-encompassing totality; it is a series that continues, in some forms, through what we call the postcolonial world of today. In speaking of colonial discourse, one necessarily treads on unstable ground; one seeks to identify the colonizing gestures in language while recognizing the impossibility of containing them within a bounded textual field. My discussion, then, will take place on a kind of border terrain, within an area of tension between definition and powerlessness to define, between containment of my subject and recognition of its uncontained plurality.

The problematic nature of this subject has required imaginative and often nontraditional critical approaches. In the English-speaking world alone, a number of studies in recent years have begun to create new knowledge about colonial discourse and its variations, such as Orientalist, Africanist, and primitivist discourse. Edward Said, Christopher Miller, and Patrick Brantlinger have examined the discourses of colonialism primarily in canonical works of English and French literature, and in popular adventure novels. James Clifford and Marianna Torgovnick have written provocatively on the connections between twentieth-century literature, art, and ethnography. Mary Louise Pratt has written a comprehensive study of travel writing as part of the history of European imperialism since the Renaissance. Sara Suleri has studied the rhetoric of the British in India. Ashis Nandy has given new life to the study of the psychology of colonization. Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have helped to formulate theoretical models for what promises to be an ever-renewing intellectual project.

My own work, which is indebted to all of these writers, seeks both a return to basic principles of rhetorical study and an expansion of the field of inquiry into certain new areas. I have found most of my examples in literary and popular journalism and in related genres such as exploration narratives, travel writing, and the memoirs of colonial officials. My focus on nonfiction writing is motivated by a desire to examine the discourse in a form unmediated by the consciously aesthetic requirements of imaginative literature. Journalism is distinguished from fiction by the conventional expectation of its grounding in an historical actuality; its relation to this actuality is understood to be primarily metonymic and historically referential rather than metaphoric and self-referential. Nonfiction writing in general often combines this metonymic quality with an absence of formal closure, so that it opens directly onto the fractures and contradictions of colonialist epistemology.

However, I also try to show how journalism and other forms of nonfiction, despite conventional expectation, depend on the use of myth, symbol, metaphor, and other rhetorical procedures more often associated with fiction and poetry. Thus I present nonfiction writing, and literary journalism in particular, as the means for staging an introductory analysis of colonial discourse. The questions to which I continually return are the following: How does the Western writer construct a coherent representation out of the strange and (to the writer) often incomprehensible realities confronted in the non-Western world? What are the cultural, ideological, or literary presuppositions upon which such a construct is based?

My exploration of these questions involves two basic procedures: (a) a *mapping* of the discourse, which identifies a series of basic tropes which emerge from the Western colonial experience, and (b) an informal *genealogy,* in which the repetitions and variations of these tropes are seen to operate across a range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts. These basic procedures are accompanied throughout by a reflection on the nature of writing itself, not only as an epistemic violence and a colonizing order, but also, to cite Michel Foucault, as that which opens up "a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions" (1983:220), including the subversion of its own order.

I have devoted a chapter to each of twelve rhetorical modes, or ways of writing about non-Western peoples. Taken together, these constitute a kind of repertoire for colonial discourse, a range of tropes, conceptual categories, and logical operations available for purposes of representation. Since these rhetorical modes are not confined to journalism, I also have occasion to cite their occurrence in such genres as essays in political and moral philosophy and documents in colonial administration. In doing so, I wish to suggest that journalism follows on more systematic orders of discourse, adapting them to particular events and translating them into a language of popular appeal. Journalistic language is a kind of palimpsest, underneath which the texts of Rousseau, Diderot, or Carlyle lie just barely effaced. These rhetorical modes, however, must be understood as more than merely literary or philosophical; they are the tropes that come into play with the establishment and maintenance of colonial authority, or, as sometimes happens, those that register the loss of such authority. There is nothing especially conscious or intentional in their use; they are part of the landscape in which relations of power manifest themselves. As in any organizing taxonomy, this project involves a certain degree of abstraction, not to say reduction: it subordinates the complexity and discreteness of any moment to the need for understanding it within a larger context. If I find that the language of the French in Algeria conforms in certain ways to that of the British in India or the Americans in the Philippines, it is

not that I choose to ignore the substantial differences—political, cultural, ideological, geographical—which distinguish these encounters from one another. Rather, given the obvious differences, I have instead tried to identify the unexpected parallels and the common genealogies that unite these apparently disparate occasions of discourse. Taking historical difference as a matter of course, I have looked for lines of convergence, correspondence, and analogy.

By the same token, the list of rhetorical modes which provide titles for the following chapters should not be considered definitive; there may be other modes or other ways of defining the ones I have designated. Nor should they be understood as entirely discrete from one another; on the contrary, they overlap continually, and certain tropes might be classified as subcategories of others. What I have called the rhetorical strategies of *debasement*, for example, is a form of *negation* in the sense that it negates the value of the other. Likewise, the trope of *idealization* in practice often merges with *aestheticization*, just as the figure of the noble savage represents both a philosophical and an aesthetic ideal. This slippage between categories is probably inevitable to any rhetorical taxonomy, including classical treatises on rhetorical figures. It is to be hoped that the imprecisions of this procedure may be tolerated, however, in the interests of describing the nature of a discourse whose forms are related, as in all writing, by both repetition and difference. Having sketched a general outline of my project, I would now like to consider more closely some of its critical assumptions.

In writing about Claude Lévi-Strauss's studies of the Indians of western Brazil, Jacques Derrida has identified what he calls the *anthropological war*—"the essential confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures, even when that communication is not practiced under the banner of colonial or military oppression" (1976:107). Derrida argues that the writing produced by this confrontation always involves a "violence of the letter" imposed by one culture upon the other, a violence, in other words, "of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations." The very process by which one culture subordinates another begins in the act of naming and leaving unnamed, of marking on an unknown territory the lines of division and uniformity, of boundary and continuity.

One already sees that this notion of the anthropological war extends beyond anthropology as a discipline and beyond the initial confrontation of cultures. In its broader sense, it includes the entire system by which one culture comes to interpret, to represent, and finally to dominate another. It includes, in other words, the discourses of colonialism as produced in such

forms as imaginative literature, journalism, travel writing, ethnographic description, historiography, political speeches, administrative documents, and statutes of law.

Culture and colonization are etymologically as well as historically related; both derive from the Latin *colere:* to cultivate, to inhabit, to take care of a place. The Latin *colonus* designated both a farmer or husbandman and a member of a settlement of Roman citizens, or *colonia,* in a hostile or newly conquered country (*OED*), while *cultura* referred both to tilling the soil and to refinement in education and civilization.

Modern uses of *colony* and *colonialism* are no less ambiguous and multivalent than their Latin roots. The British divided their colonies into three classes—crown colonies, colonies with "representative" governments, and those with "responsible" governments—designating increasingly indirect forms of crown rule. Colonies with "responsible" governments were eligible for elevation to "dominion" status. An equally diverse range applied to the French Empire under the Third Republic (1871–1940), where the Ministry of Colonies ruled most territories, but Algeria, considered part of France itself, came under the Ministry of the Interior and Tunisia and Morocco under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. European colonies in general were unofficially divided between those established for the *control* of resources and populations (French Indochina, the Belgian Congo, Dutch Indonesia, the United States Philippines), and those designed for the *settlement* of Europeans (Algeria, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand).

Just as the Romans saw the establishment of overseas colonies as part of the larger designs of their empire, it is still possible to distinguish colonialism from imperialism as part from whole. Benita Parry thus writes of colonialism as "a specific, and the most spectacular, mode of imperialism's many and mutable states, one which preceded the rule of international finance capitalism and whose formal ending imperialism has survived" (34). In speaking of the *discourse* of colonialism, however, the distinction tends to collapse, since the basic principles of this discourse, rooted in the very foundations of Western culture, also constitute the discourse of imperialism. Imperialism has survived the formal ending of colonial rule, but so has colonial discourse.

Theories of colonialism and colonial discourse begin by combining the various historical instances of colonization under the rubric of the "colonial situation," a notion for which the French anthropologist Georges Balandier provided a classic definition in 1963. According to Balandier, the colonial situation is characterized by "the domination imposed by a foreign minority, 'racially' and culturally different, over a materially weaker indige-

nous majority in the name of a racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority." A set of relations is put into place between two different cultures: one fast-moving, technologically advanced, and economically powerful; the other slow-moving and without advanced technology or a complex economy. These relations are antagonized by the "instrumental role" which the colonized society is forced to play, so that in order to maintain its authority the colonizing society resorts not only to force, but also to a series of "pseudo-justifications and stereotyped behaviors" (34–35). Balandier thus sees the colonial situation as one of "latent crisis," an order maintained precariously by ideology and representation as well as by formal administration.

Contemporary critics would question some of Balandier's assumptions: the notion of technological and economic "advancement," for example, or the insistence on a simple binary division between one culture and the other. Most would agree, however, in the value of a theoretical model for the colonial situation as something that exists in the real world and that linguistic representation belongs to it either as an instrument of colonial rule or, more fundamentally, as the set of signs in which the colonial situation can be read. In pointing out that the essential confrontation of cultures marking the colonial situation extends beyond the "banner" of colonial rule itself, Derrida recalls Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony and the power of ruling ideas which continue to hold sway outside the historical and institutional limits of direct domination. My own study treats colonial discourse as belonging both to the classic colonial situation and to the more elusive, more powerful forces of cultural hegemony in the postcolonial world.

"Postcolonial" is a word that engenders even more debate than "colonial," in part because of the ambiguous relation between these two. In the pages that follow I shall refer to the postcolonial in two ways: as an historical situation marked by the dismantling of traditional institutions of colonial power, and as a search for alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era. The first is an object of empirical knowledge—new flags fly, new political formations come into being. The second is both an intellectual project and a transcultural condition that includes, along with new possibilities, certain crises of identity and representation. Gayatri Spivak, for example, an Indian-born American academic, speaks movingly of her estrangement both from "Western liberalism" and from the indigenous peoples of her native country (70–72). But in neither the historical nor the cultural sense does the postcolonial mark a clean break with the colonial: the relations of colonizer to colonized have neither remained the same nor

have they disappeared. The instability of the colonial/postcolonial divide belongs to discourse as well.

With this instability always in mind, my concentration is on writing itself rather than on other manifestations of colonial rule. Returning for a moment to that classic situation, one can see a metaphorical relation between the writer and the colonizer. The problem of the colonizer is in some sense the problem of the writer: in the face of what may appear as a vast cultural and geographical blankness, colonization is a form of self-inscription onto the lives of a people who are conceived of as an extension of the landscape. For the colonizer as for the writer, it becomes a question of establishing authority through the demarcation of identity and difference. Members of a colonizing class will insist on their radical difference from the colonized as a way of legitimizing their own position in the colonial community. But at the same time they will insist, paradoxically, on the colonized people's essential identity with them—both as preparation for the domestication of the colonized and as a moral and philosophical precondition for the civilizing mission.

The colonizer's traditional insistence on difference from the colonized establishes a notion of the savage as *other*, the antithesis of civilized value. And yet the tendency of modern literature and science has been to locate the savage within us, in our historical origins and in our psychic structure. As modern, civilized human beings, we assert authority over the savage both within us and abroad, but the very energy devoted to such an assertion acknowledges its own incompleteness *as* authority. When we obey or are obeyed, how much of that obedience is mere mimicry? Colonial discourse bears this constant uncertainty, leading to an inherent confusion of identity and difference, a simultaneous avowal and disavowal of its own authority. This fundamental instability makes for a rich profusion of rhetorical forms which often clash with one another, and yet which all enter equally into the matrix of relations of power that characterizes the colonial situation. The crisis-ridden, unstable context of colonial power makes for a shattering of its discourse, not unlike the profusion of different voices in a paranoid schizophrenic or in *The Waste Land*. Colonial discourse, despite its rather constant function in serving the forces of order, actually assumes a number of widely divergent rhetorical forms, like a series of fragments made by stress fractures under the burden of colonial authority.

It will be apparent by now that I use the phrase "colonial discourse" to designate a space within language that exists both as a series of historical instances and as a series of rhetorical functions. Historically speaking,

↑
...1 section

BODIES

The final field of visual penetration for the journalist is that of the human body. In classic colonial discourse, the body of the primitive becomes as much the object of examination, commentary, and valorization as the landscape of the primitive. Under Western eyes, the body is that which is most proper to the primitive, the sign by which the primitive is represented. The body, rather than speech, law, or history, is the essential defining characteristic of primitive peoples. They live, according to this view, in their bodies and in natural space, but not in a body politic worthy of the name nor in meaningful historical time. The bodies, not only of so-called primitive peoples but of all the colonized, have been a focal point of colonialist interest which, as in the case of landscape description, proceeds from the visual to various kinds of valorization: the material value of the body as labor supply, its aesthetic value as object of artistic representation, its ethical value as a mark of innocence or degradation, its scientific value as evidence of racial difference or inferiority, its humanitarian value as the sign of suffering, its erotic value as the object of desire. Reading the private diaries of Bronislaw Malinowski, Torgovnick notes the ethnologist's obsession with the bodies of the Trobriand islanders and finds that by contrast his published ethnographies serve to sublimate his erotic desire by "converting feelings into magisterial observation guided by pure, untainted theory" (231). Surveillance thus enables both visual possession of the body and an interposition of technique which safely conceals the body of the observer.

Stanley, among others, comments continually on the bodies of the Africans he encounters, often subjecting them to anthropometric examination—the measurement of body parts commonly practiced by nineteenth-century researchers. In his writings on the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition (1888), Stanley cites sixteen separate measurements for the body of a pygmy male—height 4 feet, circumference of head 20¼ inches, circumference of chest 25½ inches, etc.—while he describes a female in slightly more subjective language:

> She is of a light brown complexion, with broad round face, large eyes, and small but full lips. She had a quiet modest demeanour, though her dress was but a narrow fork clout of bark cloth. . . . I notice when her arms are held against the light, a whitey-brown fell on them. Her skin has not that silky smoothness of touch common to the Zanzibaris, but altogether she is a very pleasing little creature. (1891, 1:368)

The eye treats the body as a landscape: it proceeds systematically from part to part, quantifying and spatializing, noting color and texture, and finally passing an aesthetic judgment which stressed the body's role as object to be viewed. However, the conditions which make this leisurely inspection possible are in this case those of forcible arrest and custody. Stanley's party has been skirmishing with the pygmies as he cuts his path through their territory, and these particular specimens are brought to him as prisoners of war. The situation serves as a reminder that the freedom of the gaze depends on the security of the position from which it is directed.

The counterpart to this detailed inspection of body parts is the sighting which takes in the entire body at once and removes it from its surroundings by means of a framing device. My example is from Hemingway, and in moving from Stanley to Hemingway we move not only a half century forward in time, and from the Ituri forest of the Congo Basin to the plains of East Africa. We also move from the era of geographic exploration to its leisurely imitation in the sport of the big game hunter. And we move, finally, from robust nineteenth-century ideals of progress and civilization to a modernist sensibility that defines itself in terms of impotence, anxiety, and loss.

In *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), Hemingway's "absolutely true" account of a hunting expedition, there is a moment when the writer's eye narrows its focus from a landscape to a single human body:

> We glassed that valley until the sun came onto us, then hunted around the other side of the mountain where the other B'wana . . . had shot a fine bull kudu, but a Masai walked down the center of the valley while we were glassing it and when I pretended I was going to shoot him Garrick became very dramatic insisting it was a man, a man! (172)

Garrick is Hemingway's name for his theatrical Mbulu guide. When warned of the nature of his ostensible target, Hemingway turns to this man and asks, "Don't shoot men?" Taking the bait, the guide puts his hand to his head, saying, "No! No! No!" This little scene, perhaps harmless in intent, serves as a metaphor for certain aspects of the colonial presence in Africa: the Masai, representative of the tribe that proudly rejects assimilation to the colonial order, here is framed in the sights of a gun barrel. The act of drawing a bead on him is used to instill terror in the relatively colonized African guide, who may have reason to think that the white man could kill a Masai for sport, or out of ignorance.

Although Hemingway's irony is directed at his histrionic guide, the task

2 APPROPRIATION

Inheriting the Earth

COLONIAL DISCOURSE TAKES OVER AS IT TAKES cover. It implicitly claims the territory surveyed as the colonizer's own; the colonizer speaks as an inheritor whose very vision is charged with racial ambition. Simultaneously, however, this proprietary vision covers itself. It effaces its own mark of appropriation by transforming it into the response to a putative appeal on the part of the colonized land and people. This appeal may take the form of chaos that calls for restoration of order, of absence that calls for affirming presence, of natural abundance that awaits the creative hand of technology. Colonial discourse thus transfers the locus of desire onto the colonized object itself. It appropriates territory, while it also appropriates the means by which such acts of appropriation are to be understood.

The doctrine of this appropriation is put forth most explicitly in the writings of European colonial administrators who saw the natural resources of colonized lands as belonging rightfully to "civilization" and "mankind" rather than to the indigenous peoples who inhabited those lands. Frederick Lugard, the British governor general of Nigeria in 1907–1919, considered the European powers to be "custodians of the tropics" and "trustees of civilisation for the commerce of the world": "The tropics are the heritage of mankind, and neither . . . has the suzerain Power a right to their exclusive exploitation, nor have the races which inhabit them a right to deny their bounties to those who need them" (60–61). Lugard uses "heritage" in the sense of "inheritance," invoking the rhetorical figure which traditionally casts nature in the mythic roles of both bequeather and bequest. The right of inheritance belonging to "mankind"—one established by the history of this construct in European Enlightenment thought—naturally

supersedes the narrower political interests of the other two political entities present here, suzerain power and subject races. In the course of this supersession, however, two other discursive events take place: the native races are now subsumed under the title of "mankind"—appropriated by this construct—while it is taken for granted that the rights of mankind can only be served with the suzerain power in place. The preservation of colonial rule, as well as the exploitation of colonized territories, thus becomes a moral imperative as well as a political and economic one.

A variation on this theme is offered by Albert Sarraut, governor general of French Indochina in 1911–1914 and 1917–1919, later minister of colonies. Here nature is again mythologized, not as wisely benevolent but rather as the source of an unequal apportionment which humanity must amend. Nature's "double abundance" of intellectual and material resources has been unevenly distributed so that the one now finds itself cut off from the other:

> While in a narrow corner of the world nature has concentrated in white Europe the powers of invention, the means of progress, and the dynamic of scientific advancement, the greatest accumulation of natural wealth is locked up in territories occupied by backward races who, not knowing how to profit by it themselves, are even less capable of releasing it to the great circular current that nourishes the ever growing needs of humanity. (109)

Writing in 1931, at a time when André Gide's reports from Equatorial Africa have stirred anticolonial sentiment in France, Sarraut concedes that colonial rule originates with "a primitive act of force," but argues that it has developed into "an admirable act of law": colonization is now a gesture of "human solidarity" which unites the intellectual and moral qualities of Europe with the material wealth of the tropics.

This doctrine of the colonizer's natural inheritance often determines the very manner of perceiving a landscape. As Stanley, in 1871, gazes out over the country of Ukawendi near Lake Tanganyika, the wild, unpeopled landscape is already being transformed by his imagination into familiar terrain:

> What a settlement one could have in this valley! See, it is broad enough to support a large population! Fancy a church spire rising where that tamarind rears its dark crown of foliage, and think how well a score or so of pretty cottages would look instead of those thorn clumps and gum trees! Fancy this lovely valley teeming with herds of cattle and

> fields of corn, spreading to the right and left of this stream! How much better would such a state become this valley, rather than its present wild and deserted aspect! (1970:75–76)

Stanley constructs out of the scene an English country village—pretty cottages, cattle by the stream—already a nostalgic image in the late nineteenth century. But the European experience in Africa allows for nostalgic pastoralism to be projected onto the future and made into the object of utopian desire. This utopian vision imposes an entire series of European institutions on the natural landscape. Stanley's language implies all of the structures of civil order, commerce, agriculture, family life, and religion, yet does so in such a way as to cover over the act of imposition. Under Stanley's gaze, the landscape has already prepared itself for the marriage with civilization. Everything is in order; it is a question of simple substitution and supplement rather than true transformation: the dark tamarind and the gum trees need only be replaced by the church spire and the pretty cottages. The stream already feeds pasture and farmland. In its deserted aspect, the valley calls for the colonizer to bring it into being.

John Buchan, who on the eve of his literary career served as private secretary to the South African High Commissioner in 1901–1903, indulges in a more personal vision as he gazes on a piece of land in the northern Transvaal and imagines his future country house, complete with flower gardens, fruit orchards, and imported Highland cattle grazing on the hillsides: "There will be wildfowl in my lake, and Lochleven trout in my waters." As in Stanley's view of East Africa, this utopian scene is created whole cloth out of nostalgic cultural memory, while the rhetorical act of appropriation is submerged in the process of regenerating a mythic past: South Africa is Zion to this Baron Tweedsmuir displaced by history from the Scotland of *Waverley*. Appropriation thus is not acknowledged as itself, but as a spiritual return, a *nostos,* summoned not only by historical vision but by the nature of the land itself:

> It is a land of contrasts—glimpses of desert and barbarism, memories of war, relics of old turmoil, and yet essentially a homeland. As the phrase goes, it is "white man's country"; by which I understand a country not only capable of sustaining life, but fit for the amenities of life and the nursery of a nation. (1903:91)

Buchan is selling South Africa to prospective European immigrants; the colony needs more white, and especially British, settlers to strengthen its government and economy. The power of this solicitation lies in the assumption that South Africa is already white, already home; the colonizers have only to accept what is their own.

The colonizing imagination takes for granted that the land and its resources belong to those who are best able to exploit them according to the values of a Western commercial and industrial system. This presupposition operates not only in cases of direct colonial rule, but also in the kind of indirect power exercised by the United States over the countries of Central America, where, by 1920, private U.S. interests owned most of the arable land, the railroads, and the communications systems. On a visit to Honduras in 1896—three years before the founding of the United Fruit Company—the American writer Richard Harding Davis registers wonder at the rich pasture lands, the abundant woods, the mineral treasures of silver, gold, and iron, and the soil rich enough to supply the world with coffee. He writes:

> There is no more interesting question of the present day than that of what is to be done with the world's land which is lying unimproved; whether it shall go to the great power that is willing to turn it to account, or remain with its original owner, who fails to understand its value. The Central Americans are like a gang of semi-barbarians in a beautifully furnished house, of which they can understand neither its possibilities of comfort nor its use. (1896:147)

Davis's metaphor of the beautifully furnished house recalls the pretty cottages of Stanley's vision and the noble estate transported in Buchan's imagination from Scotland to the gently rolling hills of the Transvaal. Together, these images evoke a benevolent pastoralism, an ideal of domestic order and tranquillity which suppresses the underlying desire for a radical transformation of colonized territory. The discourse once again takes over by taking cover, revealing and concealing the appropriating impulse in the same rhetorical gesture.

In "African Grammar," an essay on France's official vocabulary for addressing its colonial affairs, Roland Barthes notes the predominance of substantives as a sign of "the huge consumption of concepts necessary to the cover-up of reality" (1979:107). This variant of colonial discourse destroys the verb and inflates the noun, so that the noun tends to identify not specific objects or actions, but more generalized notions (nature, mankind, humanity) which carry the moral weight of the discourse. Language is thus petrified and solidified around a series of concepts whose substance is presented as already known and therefore beyond contestation. The *heritage* of *mankind* and the benevolence of *nature* are like France's *mission* and

Algeria's *destiny* in that their substantive form presents them grammatically as postulates not open to dispute; it naturalizes them within the discourse and confers upon them the quality of hypostasis. The pervasive character of the nominative in colonial discourse reflects a desire to set forth as self-evident the substantive reality of a moral abstraction. As Barthes writes, "Nomination is the first procedure of distraction." Nomination and substantivization may also be seen as grammatical forms of appropriation: by naming things, we take possession of them. Employed as substantives in the web of syntax, these names acquire an ontological status—a substance—of their own, thus obscuring or concealing the original act of appropriation.

Once the land has been appropriated, there remains the problem of appropriating the hearts and minds of the colonized. In 1898 Queen Victoria wrote to Lord Salisbury concerning the choice of a new viceroy for India:

> He must be more independent, must *hear for himself* what the *feelings* of the Natives really are, and do what he thinks right and not be guided by the *snobbish* and vulgar, over-bearing and offensive behavior of our Civil and Political Agents, if we are to go on peacefully and happily in India, and to be liked and beloved by high and low—as well as respected as we ought to be—and not trying to trample on the people and continually reminding them and making them feel that they are a conquered people. They must of course *feel* that we are masters, but it should be done kindly and not offensively. (3:251)

The queen's letter to her prime minister points to another paradox of colonial discourse: the desire to emphasize racial and cultural difference as a means of establishing superiority takes place alongside the desire to efface difference and to gather the colonized into the fold of an all-embracing civilization. The European role in colonial territories depends on the clear demarcation of cultural and moral difference between the civilized and the noncivilized. But the ultimate aim of colonial discourse is not to establish a radical opposition between colonizer and colonized. It seeks to dominate by inclusion and domestication rather than by a confrontation which recognizes the independent identity of the Other. Hence the impulse, whether in administrative correspondence or journalistic writing, to see colonized peoples as ultimately sympathetic to the colonizing mission and to see that mission itself as bringing together the peoples of the world in the name of a common humanity.

This rhetorical appropriation of non-Western peoples insists on their identification with the basic values of Western civilization and tends to

interpret their acquiescence to the colonial system as approval of Western ideals. But this equation of simple collaboration with a deeper moral identification, far from being regarded as a weakness in the logic of colonial discourse, instead provides one of its fundamental principles: a colonized people is morally improved and edified by virtue of its participation in the colonial system.

David Livingstone was among the first to establish the ideological link between commercial exploitation and moral improvement among the races that were later to become subject to European colonization. During the Zambesi expedition of 1858–1863, he sees "so much of this fair earth . . . unoccupied, and not put to the benevolent purpose for which it was intended by its Maker" (1865:264). Christianity was a necessary condition for the peaceful commerce among nations that would allow the exploitation of Africa's resources according to God's will. Christian conversion would therefore improve the social as well as the spiritual condition of the African. By encouraging trade, it would bring the African "into the body of corporate nations, no one of which can suffer without the others suffering with it" (1865:28).

Stanley, though hardly the humanitarian that Livingstone was, had a similar tendency to see African compliance in the colonial enterprise as affirming a spiritual and familial bond between colonizer and colonized. On one occasion he is deeply moved by an incident in which the natives are made to understand that he is willing to pay wages—an idea ostensibly foreign to them—for their labor in building a river station on the Congo. He sees this introduction of labor value as a transformation of the native's spiritual state: "It created a hope . . . in every man, that he possessed something that was saleable . . . that the force of those masses of muscle had become marketable and valuable" (1885, 1:171).

Apart from the principle of free labor, another essential part of Stanley's design for the exploitation of the Congo was the establishment of open marketplaces at the river stations where the natives could come to exchange their goods, instead of foraging the countryside every day in search of food. When the natives finally begin using such markets, the event takes on enormous significance for Stanley:

> When I saw the terrace plaza being employed as a common market-ground, I became conscious that the victory against aboriginal conservatism was won. . . . I felt, when I saw two scores of women and children squatted in the perfect enjoyment of unlimited confidence, that I had become endowed with the honour of paternity, and not for

> untold wealth would I have permitted that confidence to be tarnished with the least exhibition of distrust or violence. (1885, 1:500–501)

This language not only appropriates native resources to European colonial ends; it also appropriates the native point of view, so that Stanley speaks *for* the African. Wage labor creates new hope in the African mind; the African women enjoy unlimited confidence within the confines of the terrace plaza, a European structure that by its very architectural configuration enforces the principles of inclusion and domestication inherent in the rhetoric of appropriation. The victory which Stanley celebrates is that which is won throughout the European empire when native peoples are gathered into the fold, and when they are seen as embracing the institutions of their conquerors.

It is a victory, however, already hedged with a rhetoric of protection, for the threat of distrust or violence remains inherent in this classic colonial situation. The notions of paternal honor, perfect enjoyment, and unlimited confidence, like those of mankind and human solidarity, are used to represent the imposition of colonial rule as the restoration of a harmonious order—not that of aboriginal conservatism, but of a more benign conservatism, at once natural and civilized, like the love between father and daughter. The language of this conservatism itself effects a rhetorical pacification of the colonial enterprise, while it also serves as an instrument of policing power: not the least exhibition of distrust or violence shall be permitted to tarnish the perfect confidence of the colonized.

Stanley's impression of the Africans' unlimited confidence in his design conforms to the convention which represents European intervention as the response to an *appeal* from less fortunate peoples, an appeal often combined with the theme of moral and political improvement. Sarraut sees the precolonial history of such peoples as a tragic story of war, massacre, and slavery: "The unceasing clamour of warfare issuing forth from this anarchy and from this heredity of violence over the centuries raised toward us a pathetic appeal [*un appel pathétique*] that was impossible to ignore" (125). Colonial intervention thus responds to a threefold calling: that of nature, which calls for the wise use of its resources; that of humanity, which calls for universal betterment; and that of the colonized, who call for protection from their own ignorance and violence.

With the end of the classic colonial era, it has become all the more important to find signs among non-Western peoples of their sympathy and identification with the West. The spread of Western influence in its various forms has been a preoccupation of the media, which finds the avid consumption of Western goods to be evidence of the approval of Western culture as a whole. Early explorers won the natives over with a display of the phonograph or the fork. More recently it has been Dior fashion and the hamburger. During the Salvadoran civil war of the early 1980s, a *Chicago Tribune* correspondent reported the following:

> McDonald's has been bombed twice in the last year by guerillas who view Big Macs as symbols of American imperialism. Nevertheless, Salvadorans continue to flock to the house of Ronald McDonald.
>
> "A war is a war," said Armando Carranza, a flower shop owner, as he bit into a quarter-pounder, "but a good hamburger is heaven." (September 6, 1981)

The example is extreme in its sheer silliness, yet it belongs to an entire class of reporting that seeks to minimize conflict and cultural difference by celebrating the unifying power of Western (or North American) commercial and cultural institutions. The nature of the discourse being produced here is such that this theme often exists alongside one which decries the loss of traditional ways of life to Western influence and which, occasionally, will even romanticize those who seek to resist such influence. The combination of these themes, sometimes called "balance" in journalism, in fact is symptomatic of a profound disequilibrium, for what it reflects is not the object as it really is, but rather the conflict and anxiety inherent in the representation of cultural difference.

In this particular instance, the appropriated point of view is that of the conveniently middle-class shopowner, for whom Western-style consumption takes precedence over the realities of revolution. Even his idioms, borrowed from the language of advertising, are as thoroughly Americanized as they are improbable. In a gesture of seemingly desperate reassurance, the writer seems to say that this is the real voice of El Salvador, representing those thousands who risk guerilla attack in their eagerness to consume North American products.

The demand for such signs becomes most intense in those places where revolution, socialism, tribalism, or religious fundamentalism calls into question the power of Western influence. In a series of articles written in 1981 while traveling with Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces in Angola, a *Washington Post* reporter stresses the Western virtues of his hosts, who are struggling to overthrow the country's Marxist government. When Savimbi's troops perform in parade formation, they are "not as elegant as Britain's Coldstream Guards, but they have a lot of clan." One of their commanders

4 CLASSIFICATION

The Order of Nations

IN A 1984 COVER STORY ON AFRICA, *TIME* PROVIDES A classic example of the survival of colonial discourse in the postcolonial era. The story reports on "the pattern of failure that has gripped the continent" since its independence from European colonial powers in the 1960s and measures this failure by both political and economic standards. In the political arena, nascent democracies have given way to assassinations, purges, and coups. African nations have fared no better economically and technologically, having allowed their "colonial inheritance"—the roads, railways, and cities built by Europeans—to deteriorate. Only a handful of these nations have achieved political stability, which requires "a mixed economy, a strong, pragmatic central government, and evolving democratic institutions, however imperfect." *Time* concludes this analysis with a call for civic responsibility among Africans, as well as its own prescription for Africa's troubles:

> A quarter-century after *Uhuru!*, African leaders must recognize that anti-colonial rhetoric may win votes, but it will not solve problems. . . . The positive legacies of the past must be emphasized, while new ideas are tested to deal with the problems of the present and future. . . . Africans must accept the essential requirement of political stability. Without that resolve, nationhood in Africa will too often be, as it has been in the past, a sad parody of itself. (January 16, 1984)

Africa's problems are indeed grave, and one might assume that Africans themselves do not need *Time* to tell them so. My concern, however, is not to analyze Africa, but to analyze analysis, that is, to examine the rhetorical position from which Africa is analyzed, judged, and admonished.

Time's presentation relies on a number of rhetorical features characteristic of much Western writing on the Third World: first, the condescending tone, which lectures Africans on how they should govern themselves. The failures of Africa are attributed, by implication, to the African character rather than to historical causes, as if Africans were somehow incapable of comprehending the value of political stability. Second, *Time* sets forth a single standard of economic and political organization to which all nations must aspire; there is no sense that different cultures may require different institutions of social order. Finally, there is the classification of nations according to their relative failure or success in meeting this standard, providing a hierarchy of political configurations while plotting these "evolving" institutions in the temporal dimension along a single line of development: African societies are more or less distant from the desired model according to how far they have advanced along this line. In his study of the temporal paradigm in anthropology, Johannes Fabian shows that the evolutionary sequences assigned to different cultures in the nineteenth century were closely linked to European policies of European colonialism and imperialism (16–17). *Time*'s analysis suggests the survival of the paradigm in the postcolonial world: the essentially political relation between Western nations and Africa is recast and naturalized as a temporal relation which has its roots in the social evolutionism of the Victorian era.

In this chapter I examine the nature of classification itself as a rhetorical procedure by which Western writing generates an ideologically charged meaning from its perceptions of non-Western cultures. In doing so, I shall trace a certain genealogy of classification which draws together disparate strands from the history of science, the language of colonial administration, and the postcolonial ideology of modernization.

We must not imagine, writes Foucault in *L'Ordre du Discours*, that the world offers to us a readable face that we have only to decipher. The world is not an accomplice to our knowledge. We must think of discourse as a violence that we do to things or as a practice that we impose on the world (1971:55). Every discourse orders itself both externally and internally: it marks itself off against the kind of language it excludes, while it establishes within its own limits a system of classification, arrangement, and distribution. The rational discourse of Western knowledge opposes reason to madness and truth to falsehood, placing its enterprise on one side of each such antithesis. Internally, the same discourse organizes the universe into disciplines, each with its own teratology which refuses the eccentric, the abnormal, and the monstrous in favor of those propositions that inscribe

themselves within the theoretical horizons recognized by the discipline. A statement can lay claim to truth, Foucault says, only by obeying a discursive police. Within the realm of discourse, classification performs this policing function, assigning positions, regulating groups, and enforcing boundaries.

While this regulatory function of classification is always present, the nature of classification itself changes with the evolution of discourse. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault cites the example of natural history as it evolves from the Renaissance to the end of the classical age in the eighteenth century. In the Renaissance, to write the natural history of a plant or an animal was not merely to describe its elements or organs, but also to discuss "the virtues it was thought to possess, the legends and stories with which it had been involved, its place in heraldry," and so forth (1970:129). By the time of the naturalists Linnaeus, Lamarck, and Buffon, such *litteraria* had been excluded from scientific discourse, which now limited itself to a classificatory system devoted to the arrangement of things in a "table." This is what Foucault calls the "squared and spatialized" development of natural history.

At the end of the classical period, classification had moved beyond the mere nomination of the visible to the establishment, for each natural being, of a *character* based on the internal principle of organic structure. This principle gave rise to a system of ordering that allowed for a hierarchy of characters depending on their relative complexity of organic structure and for classification according to certain key functions: how a species reproduces or what it eats. To classify therefore meant no longer simply to arrange the visible, but to perform a circular analysis that related the visible to the invisible, its "deeper cause," then rose again toward the surface of bodies to identify the signs that confirmed the hidden cause. Such a system of understanding—one that orders natural beings according to function and establishes a hierarchy based on internal character—has consequences for the classification of human races in the Western mind and ultimately for the analysis of Third World societies in Western writing.

Charles Darwin's *Journal of Researches* (1839), written during the voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle to South America, belongs to an era in which travel writing, scientific observation, and natural philosophy could still be combined in the same work. It shows how completely the principles of observation and classification in natural history were adaptable to the study of human races. Describing a group of Indians at Tierra del Fuego, Darwin finds them "stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their voices discordant, their ges-

tures violent and without dignity" (1839:235). These Fuegans apparently have no homes, but sleep on the wet ground, and subsist on a miserable diet of shellfish, berries, and fungi. They seem to have no government or head.

In the manner of any naturalist of his age, Darwin moves from these visible signs and functions to the invisible character of his object. He doubts that the Fuegans have feelings of domestic affection and wonders whether they experience any pleasure in life at all: "How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play? What is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgement to decide upon?" (235). This baseness of character, deduced from the relation of the visible to the invisible, is then projected back onto the concrete and observable: Darwin suggests that the technical skill of the Fuegans can be compared only to the instinct of animals, for the poor design of their canoes has remained the same for two hundred and fifty years. The analysis of character finally permits Darwin to classify the Fuegans among other human societies. He finds that here "man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world." Even the South Sea Islander is more civilized, as is the Eskimo, who at least enjoys some of the comforts of life and shows skill in the design of canoes. Only the Australian aborigine comes nearest the Fuegan "in the simplicity of the arts of life." For Darwin, the hierarchy of human societies is thus established principally by technology, and by the nature of social and political organization: "If the state in which the Fuegans live should be fixed at zero in the scale of government . . . New Zealand would rank but a few degrees higher, while Tahiti, even when first discovered, would have occupied a respectable position" (502).

Both here and in his later, more advanced work, the contour of Darwin's thought reflects the "squared and spatialized" development of natural history, in which the objects of nature are arranged in spatial configuration—a scale or a table—which is then projected onto the temporal dimension. For Darwin, the map of the world is a great table which places the various peoples side by side, while his investigation of their functions and characters shows them to exist at different stages in a process of improvement whose end or highest point is represented by modern European civilization. The principle in natural history of internal organic structure is thus transferred to the classification of humanity in two ways, referring to moral or intellectual character in the human mind as well as to the social and political character of human society. These two subjects of valuation, moreover, remain intimately connected insofar as the higher orders of technology and government reflect a greater capacity for reason and human feeling.

The dual axes of time and space in Darwin's thought create a tension which sees humanity as historically capable of improvement, but which also reifies the existing hierarchy of human societies. The notion that societies can be classified according to their degree of advancement along the same path works, paradoxically, to support the notion of inherent ethical differences among races, that is, differences in *character*. The nineteenth-century debate over human race and evolution reflects this tension between an essentialist and an historical view, yet the two views tend to reinforce one another when it comes to a system of classification for the actual state of peoples.

One way to explore the dimensions of this debate is to compare Darwin's ideas with those of Joseph-Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, the diplomat, novelist, and historian for whom European interest in non-Western peoples provided the occasion for ethnic propaganda. In his *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* (1854), Gobineau divides humanity into three races which, for as long as they remain genetically distinct, will always be marked by basic differences in character indicated by bodily signs. For the black, "the animal character imprinted in the shape of the hip-girdle marks his destiny from the moment of birth. He will never develop beyond the narrowest range of mental powers." His voracious appetite, indiscriminate sensuality, and unstable emotions make him a "human machine" that is both dangerous and cowardly. The yellow race is superior to the black, but characterized by feeble desire, lassitude, and passivity. As a people, the members of this race form a malleable raw material that "any civilizer might willingly choose for the base of his society, although they would not suffice for the actual creation of such a society, nor lend it the qualities of energy, beauty, and action." Superior to the black and the yellow, the white race is characterized by energetic intelligence, perseverance, physical strength, an instinct for order, and a pronounced taste for liberty which despises on one hand, "the rigid social forms under which the Chinese willingly sleep, as well as the severe despotism which alone can restrain the blacks" (1:215–216).

Where Darwin sees the social and moral inequalities among races as produced by differences in the evolving human relation to natural environment, Gobineau sees them as "native, original, sharply defined, and permanent" (1:35). For Gobineau, one cannot identify the European race with the other two even in an evolutionary past, for the white race has never existed in the purely primitive state: "From the very beginning, it appears as relatively cultivated and in possession of the principle elements of a superior state which, developed later in its multiple branches, would be-

come the diverse forms of civilization" (1:231). The European race, in other words, has *always already* been superior and innately civilized. Although Gobineau's ideas conflict with Darwin's on the question of social evolution, both positions were appropriated by the ideology of colonialism, which insisted on the essential superiority of the European colonizer as well as on the ideals of a civilizing mission bent on improving the moral condition of the colonized.

In another version of the nineteenth-century debate, the exchange between Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill over the problem of black labor in the British West Indies shows how both authoritarian and humanitarian ideas can contribute to a fundamentally colonialist position. Published in the December 1849 issue of *Fraser's Magazine*, Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question" argues that the blacks, both for their own good and for that of the empire, must be compelled to work for whatever wages the white plantation owners are able to pay, and that the natural superiority of the British colonists ought to be sufficient justification for their mastery over the darker race. He thus presents a position at once racist, essentialist, and Platonic: "If precisely the Wisest Man were at the top of society, and the next-wisest next, and so on until we reached the Demerara Nigger (from whom downwards, through the horse, etc., there is no question hitherto), then were this a perfect world, the extreme *maximum* of wisdom produced in it" (15). In other words, nature has already determined a hierarchy of humanity which government, in the case of the West Indies, would be wise to act upon. In this ideal view of things, power follows reason, and history follows nature.

Mill's reply (January 1850) argues for the natural rights of the black race, but takes for granted their actual backwardness and lack of civilization. Mill acknowledges the great gulf that separates the African from the European, but does not attribute it to an *original* difference. Rather it is a matter of the European having advanced further in "the history of human improvement" and "the progress of science" (39). In the tradition of natural history, Mill proposes that the same methods of analysis used to discover "the laws of external nature" be applied to investigate "the laws of the formation of human character." Such an investigation would show, he argues, that differences in human character are as much the result of historical accident and external influence as of original nature: what makes the European civilized where the African is not can be attributed to an extraordinary and fortunate combination of circumstances. Thus insofar as it defines human character, nature follows history. However, while rejecting the essentialist and authoritarian doctrines of Carlyle, Mill nonetheless accepts the notion

of racial hierarchy implicit in Carlyle's position. Mill's own argument is that black Africans can be improved not by being forced to work against their will, but by sharing in the benefits of European civilization.

The fundamental principle of relative degrees of *complexity* governs not only the rhetorical opposition between civilized and savage states, but also the hierarchical classification of humanity along a series of gradations ranged between the two poles of civilization and savagery. Though they differ on the question of where to locate the origin of differences in complexity, both Mill and Carlyle assume that human character and society are to be classified according to this measure. Again, it is an assumption they inherit from the natural history of the classical age. Foucault cites the theories of the eighteenth-century naturalist Jean-Baptiste Robinet, who posits a continuity of natural species ranging between an extremely simple, archaic prototype and the ultimate complication of this model in the form of the human being: "Between these two extremes there lie all the possible degrees of complexity and combination—like an immense series of experiments, of which some have persisted in the form of continuing species and some have sunk into oblivion" (1970:155).

Given the expansion in the knowledge of nature that accompanied the exploration and colonization of new territories in the nineteenth century, the principles of natural history inevitably provide paradigms for the rhetoric of colonial rule. We find, for example, that the principle of relative human complexity acquires a very practical value in the writing produced by colonial administrators. The British administration of South Africa in 1903 faced the immediate problem of governing a Boer population whose armies had just been defeated in war. For John Buchan, a member of that administration, the solution to this problem lay in an understanding of the Boer character which placed it only just above the level of the native black African. "In the case of a savage or a backward nation," Buchan writes of the Boers, "the history is simple, the ingredients in racial character few and intelligible." In such cases the nature of the society as a whole can be read in the individual, the entire race being "little more than the individual writ large." In complex societies such as the British, by contrast, "the composition is a chemical process, the result is a new product, not to be linked with any ingredient; the soul and mind of the populace is something different in kind from the average soul and mind of its units" (60).

In Buchan's mind, the simplicity of the Boer makes him ideal for the complex designs of British colonialism. Governing the Boers is "a simple problem" to the administration that understands them properly, while if the Boers are won over to the British side, "we shall have secured one of the

greatest colonising forces in the world." Buchan's idea is that this simple, stubborn Boer could be settled on the colonial frontiers, thus insuring that the plateaus of Britain's Central and East African possessions would "be permanently held by the white man." The Boer, in other words, is a kind of white Kaffir who, though existing nearly at the level of the black native, can be used as an instrument of subjection for the benefit of a more highly civilized white society. The logic of this plan, of course, depends on a natural hierarchy that places the black African, the Boer, and the British colonist at successively higher stages on the scale of individual and social complexity.

The classification of indigenous peoples according to their relative complexity of social organization becomes more systematic and articulated as it directly serves the interests of colonial administration. Frederick Lugard divides the natives of British Tropical Africa into three classes: primitive tribes, advanced communities, and Europeanized Africans. The primitive tribes range in social status from those who still live in the patriarchal stage, recognizing no communal authority, to those with well-defined tribal institutions. The former, Lugard writes, are subject to cruel superstition and degrading practices such as cannibalism and human sacrifice. Those who have reached the tribal stage have more highly developed systems of authority, but lack a written language or "any approach to culture." Their political organization often takes the form of a despotism marked by "a ruthless disregard for human life" (75).

The more advanced communities have benefited from the political and social influences of Islam brought by Arab conquest. The Africans who comprise such communities have been improved by the admixture of Hamitic or Aryan blood and "may therefore claim to be of a superior race-type" than the aboriginal blacks of the primitive tribes. Here Lugard echoes both the letter and the spirit of Gobineau, who considered the mixture of Hamitic and Aryan blood with black Africans as fatal to the ancient Egyptian and Assyrian civilizations, but as beneficial to the blacks of northern Africa (1:350–351). These advanced African communities, according to Lugard, have a written language, a recognizable culture, and a relatively complex government, including systems of taxation and courts of justice.

The Europeanized African typically has been educated in England and returns to Africa to practice one of the professions, such as law—a choice which, Lugard writes, "affords opportunity for the African's gift of oratory"—and journalism. He imitates European dress and customs and has little in common with the indigenous tribes. "He must be treated—and seems to desire to be treated—as though he were of a different race."

This system of classification is indispensable to the ideology of colonization as well as to the actual practice of colonial rule. On the level of ideology, it serves to demonstrate the fundamental justice of the colonial enterprise by ranking native peoples according to their relative degree of technical and political sophistication as seen from the European point of view. On a practical level, these distinctions are made in order to show that each category of native requires its own administrative tactic.

In a view considered progressive for its time, Lugard acknowledges the need for direct British administration over the most primitive peoples, but he proposes a policy that would encourage tribal cohesion and the "education of the tribal heads in the duties of rulers," so that the colonial administration of these tribes would become gradually more indirect, more efficient, and thus more powerful. In the case of the advanced communities, Lugard recognizes the strategic value of the internal authority exercised by native rulers; he urges that this authority be turned to the advantage of colonial power by a process of co-optation in which the native chiefs would constitute "an integral part of the machinery of the administration." He holds up as a model the French colonization of Morocco, where General Louis Lyautey introduced the principle of collaboration with the native chiefs, and "by this means he everywhere conciliated the populations he subdued" (228).

Finally, for the Europeanized African, Lugard proposes the formation of a Cadet Service that would prepare natives for positions in the colonial Civil Service. Here the model is the Anglicized Indian who, however separated from the native masses in education and habits of thought, yet speaks their language and knows their country. Lugard's procedures of classification may be seen as emblematic of colonial discourse as a whole, which everywhere imposes a system of nomination, of identity and difference. This classificatory system by its very structure serves to make colonial power more universal and more internally thorough: it is a colonization that administers the order of thought itself.

The views of colonial administrators like Buchan and Lugard reflect an early form of the ideology of modernization that still governs the classification of Third World nations in the postcolonial era. Although the ideology of the modern has replaced an earlier ideology of the civilized, this newer system of value performs essentially the same function of classifying human societies according to Western standards of technological and political advancement. Political analysts such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington have defined modernization as the process which transforms a

traditional, "pretechnological" society into one marked by the technology and economy of the machine, rational and secular concepts of authority, and a high degree of differentiation within the social structure.

As with the theory of natural evolution, the stages of advancement in the direction of modernization are seen as having the inevitability and irreversibility of history itself. Such is the understanding of Huntington, who has identified a number of key components of the modernization paradigm. In a summary of Huntington's theory provided by Jeane Kirkpatrick, modernization is described as a continual process: complex in its extension into all aspects of human life; systemic in the necessary and predictable interaction of its elements; global in that it eventually transforms all societies; lengthy in the time it requires; phased in that every modernizing society must pass through the same stages; homogenizing in that modernizing societies tend toward convergence and interdependence; irreversible in that the elements of the process determine a given direction of change; and finally, progressive in its ultimate benefit to humanity (Kirkpatrick 39).

It may be that the end of the classical colonial period has made the ideology of modernization both more central and more finely articulated in Western administrative policies and in the language of the press, for in the absence of direct colonial rule, it is the legitimacy of this ideology that justifies the pursuit of Western interests in the affairs of the Third World. In any case, modernization in the late twentieth century has become the standard of measure for an evolutionary continuum in which nations are classified as more or less developed forms of a single species that reaches its highest degree of refinement in the Western postindustrial state, or what Brzezinski calls the "technetronic" society.

Writing for the *Atlantic Monthly* in September 1982, the journalist Xan Smiley classifies African nations according to slightly different criteria. He divides the fifty member nations of the Organization of African Unity into a handful that have "marginally progressed," a few more that are only "marking time," and the vast majority that "have actually gone backward" since independence. Progress here means that "the average citizen of these countries enjoys a better all-round living now than before the colonial shackles were shed; more people are educated; health services have expanded." The fact that only a few African nations can claim even such modest gains is the fault of the Africans themselves: "The overwhelming reason for Africa's grim failure is that the continent is very badly governed by the Africans."

This argument follows a logical structure curiously analogous to the method revealed by Foucault in the classifications of natural history. In

this case, certain measurable qualities of the object—type of government, economic production, the literacy rate—lead to the definition of its less observable organic *character,* a character whose identity is then reasserted in a movement back to the visible phenomena which tend to confirm it. Thus Smiley's analysis moves from citing the obvious failures of Africa to identifying inherent weaknesses in an abstracted African people and society: "Material glitter is cherished, but the boring, methodical rigor with which nations are built, and the dreary civic obligations that give cement to political decisions, are somehow to be dispensed with." If you want proof of this feeble character, Smiley says in effect, you have only to look at Africa as it is: the deterioration of infrastructure, the inefficiency of bureaucracy, the persistence of tribalism, the spread of disease and famine. The undeniability of these afflictions is offered as demonstration of the African's moral and social inferiority.

This weakness of African character is not something discovered or revealed to a pure, unfettered eye, but rather is determined by the logical order followed by Western observation and by the system of classification that governs the procedures of observation. In other words, the order that classifies non-Western peoples according to the paradigm of modernization contains within it, already and as a given, the judgment of their character. Yet the emphasis on observable phenomena obscures the way in which such observation is ordered in advance, a misrecognition that allows interpretation to pass for objective truth. Classification is a form of what Heidegger calls "enframing"—the process by which the mind transforms the world into an object. Yet "enframing disguises even this, its disguising" (46).

The material I have cited here suggests that classification as a form of knowledge is never free of critical valuation, and that, at least in forms of writing such as journalism and administrative documents, this value-positing activity always takes place within a sphere of relations marked by the presence of power. What motivates the classification of Third World peoples is the need to define a coherent stance that ultimately will determine the nature of Western policies toward the Third World: investment or disinvestment, increased credit or higher interest rates, military intervention or diplomatic negotiation, aggressive aid or benign neglect.

My final journalistic example comes from a writer who appears to question the paradigm of modernization, but who does so from a position that ends by reaffirming the normative values implied by this paradigm. Writing in the *New Republic* (December 17, 1984), Elie Kedourie divides the nations of Africa and Asia into two political traditions: black Africa has inherited a tradition of tribal rule, while China, India, and the Islamic Middle East de-

5 DEBASEMENT

Filth and Defilement

IN COLONIAL DISCOURSE EVERY INDIVIDUAL WEAKness has its political counterpart—uncivilized society, according to this logic, being little more than the uncivilized mind and body writ large. Hence a certain parallelism in the themes of debasement employed by the discourse: the qualities assigned to the individual savage—dishonesty, suspicion, superstition, lack of self-discipline—are reflected more generally in societies characterized by corruption, xenophobia, tribalism, and the inability to govern themselves. In the same way, social problems in health and sanitation, unemployment, or population growth come to be associated with individual filth, indolence, and sexual promiscuity. The belligerence of Arab nations, we are told, can be traced to the violence and fanaticism of the Arab character. Here synecdoche and metaphor combine, marking the individual as both cause and emblem of a more general degradation.

What are the motives of this rhetorical debasement of the cultural Other? In *Tropics of Discourse*, Hayden White connects it to the need for positive self-definition in times of sociocultural stress. When notions such as "civilization" and "reason" are in danger of being called into question, their definition, as well as their identification with a particular people, is established by pointing to their supposed opposites, to what can be designated as "savagery" or "madness." White observes that for the ancient Hebrews what we call wildness, insanity, or savagery were all part of the same evil condition, which took the form of *species corruption*, a pollution of the natural order that God had established at the Creation. In their savage pride, men like Cain, Ham, and Ishmael had violated this order and so became progenitors to entire races known for their pollution. The marks of these accursed races were the homeless life of the hunter, linguistic confusion,

and physical aberration in both color and size (162). The Old Testament example suggests that the accursedness of the Other, like the jeremiads of the prophets, has its origin in anxiety over the preservation of cultural order and in the need to designate the unknown by a set of signs which affirm, by contrast, the value of culturally established norms.

With the expansion of knowledge into those parts of the world which traditionally had served as places of savagery and wildness for the European imagination, White sees a progressive despatialization of the concept of wildness, with a compensatory process of psychic interiorization. The Freudian model locates savagery within us and implies a continual psychic colonization and propitiation of the dark forces of the unconscious.

Here I would argue that modern colonial discourse has produced a respatialization of the savage, or that it at least maintains, on the level of ideology, a projection of anxiety onto the racial and cultural Other that has always been part of the human imagination. The contributions of psychoanalytic theory, moreover, suggest that the interiorization of savagery does not simply replace a concept of the savage as *out there*, but rather takes place simultaneously with a process of symbolic elaboration that objectifies savagery, wildness, and animality in other human beings.

What I am calling debasement in colonial discourse is not entirely distinct from the strategies of classification discussed in the preceding chapter, in that the object of debasement supplies the negative end of a system of value. In isolating this trope, however, I wish to concentrate on the active production of images inspired by the fear and loathing that lie at the heart of classificatory systems presented as the products of rational thought. This discursive production typically centers around a notion of *abjection*, as in the following formulation by the French colonial administrator Albert Sarraut:

> Without us, without our intervention . . . these indigenous populations would still be abandoned to misery and abjection; epidemics, massive endemic diseases, and famine would continue to decimate them; infant mortality would still wipe out half their offspring; petty kings and corrupt chiefs would still sacrifice them to vicious caprice; their minds would still be degraded by the practice of base superstition and barbarous custom; and they would perish from misery in the midst of unexploited wealth. (117)

In this constellation of images, misery and abjection are presented as two faces of the same condition, each serving as the sign of the other, so that the physical suffering of indigenous peoples can be associated with their

moral and intellectual degradation: disease, famine, superstition, and barbarous custom all have their origin in the dark precolonial chaos. Colonial discourse requires the constant reproduction of these images in various forms—a recurring nomination of the abject—both as a justification for European intervention and as the necessary iteration of a fundamental difference between colonizer and colonized.

The psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva has sought to establish a relation between the phenomenon of abjection in the individual human psyche and the procedures of exclusion and vilification which enter into the hierarchy of class difference. For Kristeva, the abject and its variants, such as filth, defilement, incest, and sin, mark the boundary of the self and therefore constitute the limits of the speaking subject:

> The abject is neither the subject nor the object. . . . It represents the crisis of the subject . . . insofar as it would not yet be, or would no longer be separated from the object. Its limits would no longer be established. It would be constantly menaced by its possible collapse into the object. It would lose definition. It is a question, then, of a precarious state in which the subject is menaced by the possibility of collapsing into a chaos of indifference. (1983:39)

Kristeva's "indifference" here is the *lack* of difference toward which there is always a temptation to return, a temptation cut short by the laws of exclusion, such as the incest taboo, which serve to establish the structure of the subject and a system of classification by which the subject wards off the object and constitutes it as the Other.

A similar function of exclusion holds sway on the level of social organization. Kristeva cites the example of societies in which the religious ritualization of defilement is accompanied by a strong concern for separating the sexes, which in practice means giving men rights over women. In such cases women, although apparently relegated to a passive role, are held to be untrustworthy "baleful schemers" from whom men must protect their own identity and power. Though apparently victorious in this struggle between the sexes, the masculine sex nonetheless "confesses through its very relentlessness against the other, the feminine, that it is threatened by an asymmetrical, irrational, wily, uncontrollable power" (1982:70).

More problematically, Kristeva argues that in societies which fail to mark this division of power between the sexes, there is a strong need for *other* differences in power and social status to come into play. Thus the system of endogamy in India, which requires that an individual marry within his or her own group, produces, as if in compensation for this lack of difference,

a hierarchical caste system rigidly separating the pure from the impure, untouchable classes.

I do not wish to suggest that Kristeva's theory provides a rationale for colonial order as a natural consequence of normal human development. Not enough is known about the relation between the individual psyche and the structures of power inherent in any given social environment. The idea of abjection, however, offers an analogy between the symbolic structure of individual consciousness and the systems of representation at work in culture at large. Both structures appear to depend for their internal coherence on a symbolic exclusionary tactic: the horror of the Other, the repudiation of the scapegoat. In his analysis of the neurosis of modern civilization, Freud observes, "It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness" (1961:61). Colonialism may be seen as an extreme form of this social condition, where the constant threat to a precariously established order serves to intensify, in rhetoric as well as in more material forms of oppression, the obsessive repudiation of the Other.

In connection with this threat to an established order, what I want to emphasize is the erotic element that remains present in the mechanism of scapegoating. The scapegoat, be it the maternal, the female, or the savage, represents not the object of a merely sadistic domination, but rather the object of a desire for the return to that state of undifferentiated passivity where the subject, "fluctuating between inside and outside, pleasure and pain, would find death, along with nirvana" (1982:64). The erection of a symbolic system—in social organization, in language, in ideology—establishes its terms of abjection and defilement in resistance to this terrifying desire.

In Western writing, the debasement of the Other often suggests a prohibition designed to protect the boundaries of Western cultural value against the forces of this destructive desire. On assignment from the *New York Herald* in 1873, Stanley set sail for the west coast of Africa, where he would join an expedition of the British Army engaged in subduing a tribe of rebellious Ashantis. En route to the theater of war, he stopped at Sierra Leone and recorded his impressions of African life under British colonial rule:

> If I were asked where I could find the most insolent, lying, thieving negroes, I should undoubtedly say at Sierra Leone. Through some strange caprice the English have permitted a colony of semi-civilised Africans to grow up in order to experiment, perhaps, how wild and

> rank a colony of negroes can become when left to their own sinful and wicked devices, unchecked and uncurbed by the hand of law. The English will, perhaps, plead as an excuse that the climate is against the exercise of strong will; that no matter how valiant a man be in his intentions when he sets out to govern the blatant woolly-headed rabble of this colony, he will be prostrated before the unconquerable lassitude which the climate quickly engenders in him as soon as he sets foot on its shores. (1874:6–7)

Stanley's condemnation of the African is linked both to cultural necessity and to psychological danger. By criticizing a particular administration in the name of colonialism's fundamental values—civility, authority, law—he also betrays the deeply rooted fears of the European in Africa or Asia: the loss of will, the yielding to the forces of a wild and rank human nature. This nature in its most savage form lacks boundary or restraint, "unchecked and uncurbed by the hand of law." In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the proof that Kurtz has been claimed by the powers of darkness is that he "lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts." Stanley sees a similar danger at Sierra Leone when he chastises the English for having given in to Africa's seductive and debilitating power—a power that lies not only in Africa's climate, but also in her sinful and wicked people. Aware of that influence which threatens European manhood, Stanley inverts the myth of Antaeus, whose strength was continually restored by contact with the Earth. Instead the European, as soon as he sets foot on African soil, risks prostration by an "inconquerable lassitude."

Seen in this context, the insistence on European standards of civility becomes an act of self-preservation against the danger of emasculation, while the struggle against the lotuslike powers of an unknown land becomes a defining characteristic of the discourse. Stanley constitutes the African as the abject and in doing so implies the precarious state of the European subject who is constantly menaced by the collapse into a chaos of indifferentiation. My point is that the obsessive debasement of the Other in colonial discourse arises not simply from fear and the recognition of difference but also, on another level, from a desire for and identification with the Other which must be resisted.

As one sees in Stanley's account of the situation at Sierra Leone, the principle of exclusion in rhetorical debasement has obvious political as well as psychological purposes, for the abjection of the savage has always served as a pretext for imperial conquest and domination. While this abjection had traditionally formed part of a mythic imagination, the nineteenth century

elevated it to the level of scientific truth. In 1871, the first year of Stanley's search for Livingstone, Darwin published his *Descent of Man*, which included a discussion of the "low morality of savages." According to Darwin, the virtues of primitive peoples are limited to "social instinct"; their idea of good and evil does not extend beyond that which obviously affects the welfare of the tribe. They have no notion of the "self-regarding virtues" such as temperance, chastity, and physical decency, failing to perceive how the lack of these qualities indirectly affects the tribe as a whole. Thus "the greatest intemperance is no reproach with savages," and "utter licentiousness, and unnatural crimes, prevail to an astounding extent." Finally, the savage has little power of self-command, for this power has not been strengthened "through long-continued, perhaps inherited, habit, instruction, and religion" (1936:489).

As they are presented here, the immoral qualities of the savage have in common the failure to impose a series of distinctions necessary for modern civility. Individual virtue is not distinguished from the good of the tribe. Reason and passion, work and pleasure seem impossibly confused with one another. Nakedness is public as well as private, and the body itself is not kept pure of its own inner foulness. Stopping at Bahia Blanca (Argentina), Darwin finds it "impossible to conceive anything more wild and savage" than a group of Indian revelers who drink to intoxication and then, sick from drunkenness, cast up their suppers and are "besmeared with filth and gore" (1839:118). Here Darwin in his journal quotes (in Latin) Achaemenides' description of Polyphemus from Book 3 of the *Aeneid*: "The Cyclops, stuffed with food and drowned in wine, soon bowed his head and fell to the floor, a bulk elephantine, vomiting clots and bloody wine and bits of flesh as he slept."

This defilement of the self's clean and proper body, here explicitly characterized as monstrous and inhuman, marks the transgression of a crucial boundary between inside and out, between the self and that which it literally must exclude in order to maintain its difference from the Other. For Kristeva, corporeal waste, including everything from excrement to menstrual blood, represents, like an embodied metaphor, the frailty of a symbolic order based on difference. The savagery of the Indians at Bahia Blanca, like that of savages everywhere, lies in the threat that they are posing to such an order, thus making them as thoroughly abhorrent to Western civility as the Cyclops is to Virgil's readers. The lure of the savage, like the terrifying presence of the Cyclops, has a power which cannot be resisted by force alone. Rather, it can be eluded only through the craft of language and symbol. Colonial discourse thus may be understood as

an evasive strategy, like the verbal ruse that delivers Ulysses from being literally swallowed up by the savage.

Darwin's theory that a higher morality has developed through evolutionary advancement is easily converted to the idea that the progress of civilization depends on the suppression or outright elimination of savage life. As a correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph* in 1897, the young Winston Churchill covered the Imperial Army campaign against the native Mohmand tribes of the Indian Northwest Frontier. On one occasion, he finds that the enemy has disinterred and mutilated the bodies of Imperial native soldiers who had fallen in battle a week earlier. Contemplating this atrocity, Churchill invites the reader to consider "the degradation of mind and body which alone can inspire so foul an act":

> These tribesmen are among the most miserable and brutal creatures of the earth. Their intelligence only enables them to be more cruel, more dangerous, more destructive than the wild beasts. Their religion—fanatic though they are, is only respected when it incites to bloodshed and murder. Their habits are filthy; their morals cannot be alluded to. With every feeling of respect for that wide sentiment of human sympathy which characterises a Christian civilisation, I find it impossible to come to any other conclusion than that, in proportion as these valleys are purged from the pernicious vermin that infest them, so will the happiness of humanity be increased, and the progress of mankind accelerated. (1972:33–39)

The power of this genocidal rhetoric depends on the horror of the utterly abject, abjection occasioned in this case by the defilement of a sacred order. By disinterring and mutilating the bodies of their enemies, the Mohmands violate the boundaries between life and death, between the body and its dismemberment or disintegration into the indifferent chaos surrounding it. In the logic of Churchill's discourse, they have also violated yet another limit, that between the human and the animal. His final phrase seeks to restore that boundary by a rhetorical act of exclusion: having descended to the bestial, the Mohmands must be excluded from humanity, must, in fact, be exterminated altogether in order that the idea of humanity may retain its proper value.

The principles of exclusion, boundary, and difference which enter into the debasement of the primitive are connected to the fear that the white race could lose itself in the darker ones, so that the idea of "going native" has some of the powers of interdiction and attraction that one associates with the incest taboo. The supposed danger of the European's degeneration in the presence of the primitive becomes both the source and the pretext for an obsessive reprehension of the Other. Writing in 1910, W. H. Elliott of the London Missionary Society describes one Reed, a colleague who, in the early years of chartered company rule in southern Rhodesia, lived in a native hut and ate native food:

> His life presented in an acute form the experience of all missionaries to the heathen. He was pulling them up; they were pulling him down. He was a man at the edge of a horrible pit of miry clay endeavouring to rescue them that were engulfed below. By his rope of sympathy he tried to raise them to the solid ground whereon he stood; their dead weight operated to pull him into their disgusting slough. (Cairns 67)

This is colonial discourse as allegory, in which the crisis of the individual subject is elevated to the level of ideology and made into an object lesson for "all missionaries to the heathen." Reed's transgression is the betrayal of difference—not difference from the Africans themselves, represented here as capable of salvation, but from their degraded moral state. In allegorizing this tragic effacement of difference, Elliott's language simultaneously restores the terms of that difference, reestablishing rhetorically the boundary between civilization and savagery: hence the spatial opposition of ascent and descent; the nominative distinction between Reed, "a man," and the dehumanized "they" with whom he struggles; and finally, the symbolic difference between the solid ground of European civility and the debased slough of native life.

This rhetorical trope—the warning against the seductive dangers of the savage—surfaces throughout the colonial world in every form of writing: journalism, fiction, missionary narratives, and administrative reports. The year 1924 saw the publication both of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and of a book by Lord Ronaldshay, former governor of Bengal, then secretary of state for India and Burma. Ronaldshay sees the attractions of primitive life as a threat to civilization itself:

> For a return to elemental life means also a return sooner or later to elemental emotions in all their crudity, and a rejection of the checks which civilization imposes upon them. Those who are incapable of bearing the burden of civilization will, if they can, wage war against it. That is why men of distorted genius who succumb to the lure of the primitive become a danger to society. (192)

Here the danger to society lies not in the primitive itself but in the perverted influence of the European who, like Kurtz, lacks restraint in the

gratification of his lusts and combines a distorted genius with elemental emotion. The abhorrence of Indian life, then, involves not simply a rationale for colonial domination, but also the awareness of this in-between state, where the colonial subject threatens to become neither one thing nor the other, neither civilized nor savage, but strangely without definition.

"Abjection," writes Georges Bataille, "is merely the inability to assume with sufficient strength the imperative act of excluding abject things (and that act establishes the foundation of collective existence)" (Kristeva 1982:56). Thus from the point of view of colonial writers like Elliott and Ronaldshay, abjection consists not exactly in the condition of native life, but rather in the demoralizing crisis of *going* native, where the failure to mark the necessary bounds of exclusion is presented quite explicitly as filth and defilement. This act of exclusion, multiplied and elaborated in all its variants, establishes the foundation of a colonizing system.

If the act of going native represents one threat to this exclusionary principle, what happens when the natives, from their side, take on the manners and values of the European colonizer? In another paradox of colonial discourse, the natives are reviled for their non-Western otherness, yet ridiculed for their attempts to imitate the forms of the West. In an earlier chapter, we saw how Lord Lugard looked favorably upon Europeanized Africans or Anglicized Indians, whose knowledge of their own people made them useful as members of the colonial administration. This purely practical view, however, may be less common than that which expresses contempt for the Europeanized native, especially when the presence of such a person can be interpreted as undermining the established order.

In 1888, while Stanley's search for the Emin Pasha was providing the story of *In Darkest Africa*, Rudyard Kipling was writing about colonial life in Calcutta, "The City of Dreadful Night." At a marketplace which appears to be "the trysting place of Young Calcutta," he observes a Europeanized young Indian courting his lover:

> Pyramus carries a walking-stick with imitation silver straps upon it, and there are cloth tops to his boots; but his collar has been two days worn. Thisbe crowns her dark head with a blue velvet tam-o'-shanter; but one of her boots lacks a button, and there is a tear in the left-hand glove. (1970, 18:186)

In Kipling's exacting gaze, the native government clerk dressed up like an Englishman is not merely laughable, but a symbol of India's failure: those worn collars and missing buttons reassure him of the essential difference between these impostors and real Englishmen. In *A Passage to India*,

Forster satirizes this attitude in the character of Ronny Heaslop who, unaware of Aziz's sartorial sacrifice on behalf of Fielding, observes, "Aziz was exquisitely dressed, from tie-pin to spats, but he had forgotten his back collar stud, and there you have the Indian all over: inattention to detail; the fundamental slackness that reveals the race" (82).

Kipling's amusement changes to indignation where the Anglicization of the Indian involves more than buttons and collar studs. At a municipal council debate, a long-winded Bengali representative argues for electoral reform. Kipling comments ruefully:

> The speech continues. We made that florid sentence. That torrent of verbiage is Ours. We taught him what was constitutional and what was unconstitutional in the days when Calcutta smelt. Calcutta smells still, but we must listen to all that he has to say about the plurality of votes and the weaving of ropes in the sand. It is Our own fault. (1970, 18:186)

The repetition of the capitalized first person pronoun has an ironic use here, making a proprietary claim while insisting on the essential difference between "us" and "them"—in other words, owning and disowning, avowing and disavowing at the same time.

As the foul smell of Calcutta wafts through the Council Chamber, Kipling expresses astonishment that the debate can even go on. Here is where the disavowal, the insistence on the boundary, reasserts itself explicitly: "Why should Englishmen be forced to wander through mazes of unprofitable argument against men who cannot understand the iniquity of dirt?" The mazes of argument issuing forth in torrents of verbiage connect the Indian's speech symbolically to the dark, winding streets of the city, the flow of foul gutters and teeming rivers, and the flood of humanity that populates the city. The stink of Calcutta is associated with the soiled collar of the young Indian dandy and to all the images of filth that colonial discourse attaches to its representation of the Other.

This distancing gesture belongs to an inner economy of the discourse, which must affirm the potential for civilization in colonized peoples while holding them at arm's length. For Kipling, the domesticated Indian is a kind of child of Frankenstein, both "Ours" and irremediably Other, a grotesque parody of civilized humanity. The very signs of the Indian's civility give proof of a degraded nature, for only by seeing the Indian in this way can the colonizer repel the challenge to ascendancy—a challenge made all the more immediate by its presence in one of the chambers of political power. In such instances one can see how the logic of colonial discourse

careers wildly from one position to its opposite: a colonized people is held in contempt for their lack of civility, loved for their willingness to acquire it, and ridiculed when they have acquired too much.

Despite a predominating ideology of modernization, more recent Western journalism has inherited this ambivalence over the eagerness of Third World peoples to take on the forms of the West. The desire for Western styles of consumption, for example, is seen as a natural aspiration toward a better life, while it is also treated as a sign of weakness. There is a certain contempt for non-Western peoples who appear so ready to abandon their traditions for Johnny Walker Scotch and Hollywood movies.

The journalist and novelist Shiva Naipaul, who is capable of satirizing European views of Africa, does not conceal his scorn for what he sees as the African's greed and materialism. Having just been hustled by a Nairobi shoeshine boy, he reflects on the history of the slave trade and on its stimulation of the African's "insatiable appetite" for gaudy Western goods:

> In its essence, the nature of the ties linking the African with the European has not really changed since the first Portuguese ships went sailing down the west coast of the continent: the sophisticated magic of the white man remains irresistibly alluring to the black. Transistor radios and cassette recorders have taken the place of glass beads and mirrors. (57)

For Naipaul, what distinguishes the postcolonial African from his ancestors is that he no longer fears and admires the European who has produced such wonders: "He . . . has neither wonder nor humility. He takes it all for granted. He is content with simple possession."

The theme of a frenzy for possession is applied to other non-Western peoples as well. "China Avid for Consumption" declares a headline in *Le Monde* over a story which reports on the manifestations of envy, avarice, and vandalism in a society which has just discovered the refrigerator and color television:

> With the appearance of durable consumer goods, symbols of a better life accessible to those who have money and connections, a feeling of envy on the part of the have-nots has come to light. . . . One witnesses more and more the development of a mentality according to which, if one cannot have a fridge or a t.v., there is no reason why others should have one. (June 26, 1985)

This view of the Chinese, while perhaps accurate in a limited sense, reflects a more general uneasiness over China's sudden embrace of Western things, as if the Chinese, like some tribal chieftain dazzled by mirrors and alarm clocks, failed to understand that these were *merely* things. What rough beast, the writer seems to ask, slouches behind the vision of a fully industrialized, consumerized China?

In referring to anxiety over the preservation of limit, boundary, and difference, I have in mind not only the notion of abjection, but also the fear of contamination that continually recurs as a theme in colonial discourse. In British India and Africa, European residential quarters were strictly separated from the native quarters for what were presented as sanitary reasons. In colonial Nigeria, Lord Lugard warned that yellow fever and malarial germs were present "in the blood of most natives." New townships were divided into European and native reservations separated by a 440-yard-wide buffer zone cleared of grass and scrub (called the *maidan* in India and inherited from the Moghul empire). To the charge, brought by Indians as well as Africans, that this policy of segregation was a manifestation of racial arrogance, Lugard replied that the policy favored neither race, for the European was as strictly prohibited from living in the native quarter as a native was from living in the European quarter. He added that the aim was a segregation of social standards rather than races:

> The Indian or African gentleman who adopts the higher standard of civilisation and desires to partake in such immunity from infection as segregation may convey, should be as free and welcome to live in the civilised reservation as the European, provided, of course, that he does not bring with him a concourse of followers. (149–50)

As the terms of Lugard's exception to the rule suggest, this fear of contamination is social and psychological as well as biological, a conflation that Frantz Fanon sees at the heart of negrophobia and that accounts for the colonizer's talk of "the stink of native quarters, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations" (1966:34). Here is the source of that entire constellation of images which, as we saw in the case of Albert Sarraut, combine social disorder, moral degradation, and epidemic disease under the name of abjection.

Sarraut and Lugard were writing at a late moment in the history of European colonialism, when Western journalists began to register alarm at the sheer numbers of people in non-Western countries, particularly in Asia, and at the prospect of mass emigrations to the West. In *La Foule d'Asie*, published in English as *Asia's Teeming Millions* (1931), Etienne Dennery writes that the end of the Great War signaled not only the decline of

11 EROTICIZATION

The Harems of the West

> Licence my roving hands, and let them goe
> Behind, before, above, between, below.
> Oh my America, my new found lande,
> My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man'd,
> My myne of precious stones, my Empiree,
> How blest am I in this discovering thee.
> —John Donne, "Elegie: To His Mistris Going to Bed"

IN *THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY*, FOUCAULT IDENTIFIES the "hysterization of women's bodies" as one of the great strategic unities that have informed the Western discourse of sex since the eighteenth century. For Foucault, hysterization is the process whereby the feminine body is "thoroughly saturated with sexuality," in such a way as to define a set of specifically feminine biological and moral responsibilities: duties of regulated fertility, of devotion to family, etc. (104). Within such a system of representation, the woman is constituted as her body, and her body as its sexual nature. The essence of woman is located in the womb (Greek *hystera*), a reductive process that also has its integrative function, establishing the feminine role within the mechanisms of knowledge and power.

Foucault is concerned not with the female body per se, but with the manner in which the body is constructed as an erotic and (re)productive sign within the discourse of sexuality. I wish to borrow Foucault's notion of a rhetorically constructed body for that strain of discourse which represents the colonized world as the feminine and which assigns to subject nations those qualities conventionally assigned to the female body. What I shall call the eroticization of the colonized refers to a set of rhetorical instances—metaphors, seductive fantasies, expressions of sexual anxiety—in which the traditions of colonialist and phallocentric discourses coincide. As Yvonne Kniebichler and Régine Goutalier remark in their study of colonial women, "Everything takes place as if the colonies were the harems of the West" (21).

Charles Allen's glossary of Anglo-African slang tells us that among British colonial officers the euphemism for an African mistress was "sleeping dictionary" (164). Colonial officers were required to learn native languages, and native mistresses could provide a relatively painless form of language instruction. Beyond this prosaic etymology, however, the metaphor suggests an entire series of unstated connections between the sexual and the lexical. It suggests, for example, that the African woman is a text to be opened and closed at will, and whose contents allow entry into the mysteries of African language; that this language, and by extension African culture, is itself both contained within and revealed by the female body; that sexual knowledge of her body is knowledge of Africa itself. The body as text, however, is read only as a series of lexical fragments, without regard to history or narrative. In yet another sense, the "sleeping dictionary" evokes Africa as a dormant or sleeping text, which can only be awakened and brought into definition by the intervention of the European reader. And finally, the metaphor suggests that the colonizer's own language derives from his erotic relations with "her," the pronoun in this case designating both the African continent and the African woman.

In *The Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway defines his relation to the landscape as one of insatiable erotic possession:

> Now, looking out the tunnel of trees over the ravine at the sky with white clouds moving across in the wind, I loved the country so that I was happy as you are after you have been with a woman that you really love, when, empty, you feel it welling up again and there it is and you can never have it all and yet what there is, now, you can have, and you want more and more, to have, and be, and live in, to possess now again for always. (72)

The simile of sexual union is elaborated in terms of the dynamics of male desire, here represented as an infinite movement of appropriation and physical possession unbounded by limits of time and space, yet entirely palpable and available in the present moment: "there it is." The fluid syntax and ecstatic repetition of this passage correspond to the larger structures of Hemingway's narrative, which is devoted to an alternately triumphant and frustrated hunt for ever bigger and more varied game. Hemingway shares with other writers the fascination with Africa as a mistress who is somehow both completely available and never wholly possessed.

The allegorization of colonized nations in terms of the female *figure* (bodily, rhetorical) has been a cliché of colonial history. Jean Lorrain's *Heures d'Afrique* (1899) describes Algeria as "a cunning and dangerous mistress," who distills "a climate that envelops with caresses and torpor." Another French writer of the same era sees Laos as "swooning like a las-

civious lover, between the arms of her river and her stream, drunk with pleasure [*volupté*] at the flanks of her burning mountains" (Kniebiehler 40). The erotically charged language of these metaphors marks the entrance of the colonizer, with his penetrating and controlling power, as a natural union with the subject nation. Colonial domination thus is understood as having a salutary effect on the natural excesses and the undirected sexual energies of the colonized.

Kipling, always a rich source of figurative language concerning life in the colonies, makes essentially the same point in a reference to the battle of Omdurman. Traveling through the Sudan in 1913, he recalls the battle sixteen years earlier, in which the Anglo-Egyptian forces had put down the revolt of the Mahdists:

> It was—men say who remember it—a hysteria of blood and fanaticism; and precisely as an hysterical woman is called to her senses by a dash of cold water, so at the battle of Omdurman the land was reduced to sanity by applied death on such a scale as the murderer and the torturers at their most unbridled could scarcely have dreamed. (1970, 19:303)

According to Foucault, the negative image of the "nervous woman" has constituted the most visible form of the hysterization of women's bodies. Kipling not only makes use of that image in order to characterize a revolution; he also translates the difference between colonizer and colonized into a conventional distinction between rational man and irrational woman. In opposition to images of feminine excess and disorder—hysteria, fanaticism, blood, unbridled nature, and the dream—Kipling erects a male ethic of reason and repressive order: sense, reduction, death "applied" systematically, precision, and memory. In this rhetorical strategy, differences in power are reformulated as gender difference, and colonization is naturalized as the relation between the sexes. Colonial domination thus is seen to have a beneficial, cathartic effect, like the dash of cold water in the face of the woman who has lost her senses. Kipling's curative metaphor anticipates the "surgical strikes" of the American war in Vietnam—operations of penetrating swiftness and precision on a country also characterized as having abandoned reason for a passionate fanaticism, and often represented in images of prostitutes and "dragon ladies."

The feminizing metaphors persist even in the postcolonial, post-Vietnam era of Western journalism. A *Chicago Tribune* reporter visits Vietnam in 1983 and finds the symbol of postwar Saigon in Madame Dai, a woman

of former wealth and influence now fallen on hard times: "Saigon is an aging dowager mistress, pining for her lost youth, yet still capable of firing the imagination with gestures that hint at the elegant temptress she once was" (November 27, 1983). The *Tribune* correspondent later encounters a group of Amerasian children begging in the streets. These children surround Western visitors, asking for soap, money, and cigarettes: "'I am American, I am American,' they repeat over and over. One small child looks hard at one foreigner and asks, 'Are you my father?'" Although this incident is reported without irony, it can be read as a commentary on the stock colonialist image of Saigon as an "elegant temptress," the power of naming sexual roles now having passed into the mouths of babes. In a kind of rhetorical crisis, the cavalier metaphors of seduction give way to the disquieting metonymies of genealogy, suggesting the currents of sexual guilt and anxiety that flow just beneath the rhetoric of eroticization.

SEDUCTION

The rhetorical gesture in which an entire people is allegorized by the figure of the female body has its sources in fantasies of seduction, in imaginary scenes representing the fulfillment of sexual desire. Such fantasies in their endless variation date from the early stages of European discovery and dominion over the non-Western world. In his *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* (1796), Denis Diderot purports to uncover a forgotten appendix to Bougainville's account—a dangerous supplement, in other words, which reveals the repressed sexual content of the *Voyage*.

In Diderot's version, a French chaplain from Bougainville's ship is confronted by naked Tahitian woman vying for the privilege of going to bed with him. Thia, the youngest and most beautiful, clasps him by the knees and implores him to make her a mother. An ensuing dialogue between the flustered chaplain and the girl's willing father develops a Rousseauian theme on the subject of sexuality, in which the Tahitians demonstrate their happy freedom from sexual taboos, in contrast to the unnatural inhibitions of their European visitors. In a comic denouement, the chaplain, having yielded to Thia on the first night, lies on succeeding nights with each of her sisters and finally with her mother:

> The father and mother having implored him to sleep with their second daughter, Palli appeared in the same déshabille as Thia, and the chaplain cried out several times in the night, "But my religion!" "But

> my calling!" On the third night he was troubled by the same remorse with Asto, the eldest, and on the fourth he submitted respectfully to the wife of his host. (49)

In telling this story, Diderot's larger purpose is a philosophical one, to establish his concept of natural reason in opposition to the hypocritical moralities of eighteenth-century European society. However, my observation has less to do with Diderot's philosophy than with the rhetorical phenomenon by which an eroticized idea of Tahiti is freely constructed and appropriated by philosophical and literary discourse. Diderot enters into a distinct rhetorical tradition by presenting the newly discovered territory as the site of seduction, both in the immediate, erotic sense and in the sense that the idea of Tahiti provides the scene of imaginary access to the outlawed "other" of institutional morality and conventional reason. The discovery of this Tahiti of the imagination is also a discovery or uncovering of the body; it is where the body accedes to the gratification of repressed desire.

In his discussion of Flaubert's Oriental writings, Edward Said notes both Flaubert's search for a "visionary alternative" to the ennui of the French moral landscape and his presentation of the Oriental woman in terms of "dumb and irreducible sexuality." Said sees this aspect of Flaubert, which combines a visionary with an erotic sensibility, as representative of a recurring motif in Western views of the Orient: "the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies" (1978:188).

While it may not be possible to explain why the Orient plays this seductive role in the Western imagination, one can at least suggest ways in which these fantasies of seduction correspond to certain structures within colonial discourse as a whole. For example, two elements in Flaubert's Oriental writings recall moments in Diderot. The first is the *unveiling* of the female body. In Diderot we learn of the prototypical Tahitian girl, "eager that her mother, authorized by her puberty, will remove her veil and lay bare her breast" (16). Again, the Tahitian host presents his unclothed wife and daughters to the French chaplain, saying, "Here is my wife; here are my daughters" (21). The second such element is that of serialization or *repetition*: the chaplain sleeps with each of the women in turn, as if to signify both the abundance of sexual gratification in its infinite possibilities for renewal and the absence of individuation among the objects of this gratification. These scenes of unveiling and repetition create a specifically erotic context for certain fundamental qualities of colonial discourse: the removal

of the veil serves as a visual metaphor for ideas of opening and discovery everywhere implicit in the discourse, including the "visionary alternative" of Flaubert and his contemporaries.

To the serialization of pleasure in Diderot, one can compare the reductive metaphors that Flaubert applies to Oriental sexuality. On his return from the East in 1851, he writes reassuringly to his French mistress, "The Oriental woman is no more than a machine: she makes no distinction between one man and another" (1973:270). In both writers, the language of serial repetition corresponds to those rhetorical (and administrative) operations whereby members of colonized populations are regulated, made uniform, and deprived of a subjective personal identity. These erotic fantasies are emblematic of the larger colonialist enterprise in their variation on the alternate yet complementary dynamics of reduction and seduction.

The principles of unveiling and repetition come into play perhaps most distinctly in the forms of colonial discourse produced for popular audiences. In newspaper stories, travel posters, advertisements, and the like, these structuring principles do not lie buried under the prevailing ground of a literary aesthetic or a philosophical argument; rather, they push through the surface of discourse, exposing the raw energy of a colonizing desire.

In an unusual work of documentation, the Algerian writer Malek Alloula has gathered the picture postcards of Algerian women produced and sent home by the French in Algeria during the period 1900–1930. In these photographs, the veil acts quite literally as an organizing principle: one passes from pseudo-ethnographic pictures of completely veiled women to those of women in the act of removing their veils, and finally to those who, like Diderot's Tahitian girls, have laid themselves bare to the viewer. On another level, the postcards enact the ritualistic unveiling or penetration of the private space occupied by women. One series depicts women peering through barred windows, where they are understood to be imprisoned by their husbands; another is devoted to women in their interior quarters; yet another takes the viewer inside the harem itself, where women lie in luxuriant undress. The gradual removal of the veil corresponds to the progressive conquest of interior space.

Alongside this dynamic of unveiling, the colonial postcards establish an equally forceful dynamic of repetition which depends on the complete anonymity and interchangeability of the female models. Dressed in "traditional" costumes provided by enterprising photographers, women appear in groups to reenact exotic rituals or appear singly in a series de-

voted to ethnic types, identified only as "Kabyl woman," "Moorish woman at home," "'Uled-Nayl woman," etc. Often the same model poses as different ethnic types. By describing these postcards in such detail, I wish to suggest the ways in which they serve as a synecdoche for the greater structures of colonial discourse, and even for the colonizing process in general. First, their staging of exotic ritual is a bogus repetition, a false appropriation of Algerian traditions for the minor amusement created by commodity production. As such, it corresponds to that aspect of colonial discourse in which an indigenous culture is reinterpreted under conditions determined by the observer, resulting in a presentation of indigenous life that merely reflects the framework of values imposed by the colonizing eye.

Second, the serialization of Algerian women produced by the postcards mirrors the serialized conditions of the viewer, who must constitute himself passively as part of a class (of colonials, of Frenchmen, of Europeans), that is, as *other* than himself, in order to reduce the Algerian to an interchangeable object. The denial of a subjective identity to the Algerian is a sign that the colonizer has already relinquished that identity in his own case, in the process of assuming the colonizer's role. As Jean-Paul Sartre has argued, the reductive phrases by which the white colonial characterizes the native "have never reflected real and concrete thinking; they have never even been the *object* of thought." Instead, one must see these phrases as reassuring gestures of solidarity. They are addressed by the colonials to themselves "as members of a series,"—phrases which serve to signify the colonials *as* colonials "in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, in their collective unity" (406–409). Put simply, the serializing formulas of colonial discourse reflect a loss of subjective freedom—a freedom that the colonizer, by virtue of his position *as* colonizer, has given up.

Finally, the penetration of the veil which takes place in the postcards can also be seen in larger context. Alloula points out that the veil constitutes a challenge to the photographer (and to the colonizer), not only by denying the power of his gaze, but also by making him the object of the woman's gaze: she sees him but cannot herself be seen. The unveiling photograph thus enacts "a symbolic revenge upon a society that continues to deny him access and questions the legitimacy of his desire." Even more fundamental than this motive for revenge is the desire for transparency, for overcoming the resistance that Algeria presents to European knowledge and authority. By seeming to dissolve this actual resistance, Alloula writes, "the colonial postcard offers a view of a pacified reality, restored to the colonial order, which presently proceeds to draw up an inventory of it" (64).

This business of unveiling seems to combine two contradictory impulses

of the colonialist imagination: the domesticating force of the postcards operates alongside the illusion of initiation into a world of exotic sexuality; the inspiration of a visionary alternative in Diderot or Flaubert is counteracted by language which reduces its object to a ritualized repetition. These two movements—the visionary and the domesticating—though contradictory, are fused together within the framework of the discourse. There is confirmation of this double movement in Fanon's description of European attitudes toward the Algerian woman: "Unveiling this woman is revealing her beauty; it is baring her secret, breaking her resistance, making her available for adventure" (1967:43).

FEAR AND LOATHING

The undercurrent of violence implicit in these metaphors of unveiling moves toward that aspect of the discourse in which the colonized territory represents not only sexual promise, but sexual danger as well. Within the ambivalent terms of the discourse, the symbolic rending of the veil invites erotic adventure, but it also threatens to release hidden and uncontrollable energies. In *Heart of Darkness* Kurtz's African mistress—a "wild and gorgeous apparition"—serves as a classic figure of sexual adventure, standing in synecdochic relation to "the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life" that is the wilderness itself. Yet this same erotically charged wilderness is the site of a "fantastic invasion" where Kurtz destroys himself in a madness of unrestrained lust (133–137). In Conrad's symbolic working through of the dynamic interaction between colonization and desire, the representation of Africa as both seductive and destructive occurs as a projective mechanism, originating in the colonizer's fear of forces within the self.

Stanley, whose journalism anticipates much of the psychic terrain for Conrad's fictional exploration, shares Conrad's sense of the lethal dangers inherent in Africa's seduction. As if staging a recurring inner drama, Stanley continually prepares the ground for betrayal by establishing Africa as a figure of erotic attraction. Sighting the Saharan shore from shipboard en route to the Ashanti war of 1873, Stanley quotes this apostrophe to Africa by the German Romantic poet H. F. Freiligrath:

> Oh zone so hot and glowing,
> Queen of the earth art thou;
> Sand is thy mantle flowing,
> The sun doth crown thy brow.
> Of gold, thou queenly woman,

Are all thy clasps and rims,
That fasten with fiery splendour
The garment to thy burning limbs.
(1874:4)

Freiligrath's verse serves as the paradigm for an erotic vision of the landscape which Stanley elsewhere translates into his own language. On a later expedition through the interior, Stanley refers to Africa as "still a virgin locked in innocent repose" but envisions the surrounding tropical forest as a loving embrace: "Nature did its best with her unknown treasures, shaded us with her fragrant and loving shades, and whispered to us unspeakable things sweetly and tenderly" (1891, 1:211)

Elsewhere, however, the desire to possess these unknown treasures inspires confusion and dread. Here, for example, Stanley presents the geographical enigma of the Congo River as an ominous resistance to the unveiling gaze:

> Darkness and clouds of ignorance respecting its course everywhere! What a terrible dread thing it is that so pertinaciously prevents explorers from penetrating and revealing its mysteries! It struck me thus also, as though a vague indescribable something lay ahead. (1970:360)

In an earlier chapter I noted Stanley's implied fear of emasculation by the physical and moral climate he encounters at Sierra Leone. This fear at times extends to the impenetrability of the landscape itself, which frustrates the invasive energy of the eye: "It is the unbroken expanse of foliage that baffles the eye, subdues its power and vitality, and compels the mind to an indolent and careless observation of the whole" (1874:162). In the dynamic of unveiling that gives form to the colonizer's desire, the "colossal body" of the wilderness is symbolically bound to the body of woman, while the impotency of the gaze amounts to a kind of castration.

For Stanley, the unmanning effect of Africa extends to a taboo on African women, whose sexual attraction he sees as literally a threat to the white man's life. In 1871 Stanley's assistant John Shaw had set out "in superabundant health" on the search for Livingstone, but soon after he "lost courage and health." Stanley warns that the same fate awaits his other white assistant, Farquhar, as well as the members of any African expedition actuated by no higher motives than to "indulge their lust" (1970:44).

The psychosexual anxiety inspired by the colonial situation is nowhere more manifest than in the writings of T. E. Lawrence. I have already spoken of Lawrence's tendency to idealize the asceticism of Arab life; yet his

discourse (Latin: *discursus*: a running to and fro) is always capable of veering wildly toward images of filth and sexual defilement. In a passage headed "Morality of Battle," Lawrence tells of how his Arab followers scorned the "raddled meat" and the "sordid commerce" of public women in favor of homosexuality. He goes on to describe this phenomenon in strangely ambivalent terms:

> Later, some began to justify this sterile process, and swore that friends quivering together in the yielding sand with intimate hot limbs in supreme embrace, found there hidden in the darkness a sensual coefficient of the mental passion which was welding our souls and spirits in one flaming effort. Several, thirsting to punish appetites they could not wholly prevent, took a savage pride in degrading the body, and offered themselves fiercely in any habit which promised physical pain or filth. (28)

On one level, Lawrence's complex and troubled attitude toward Arab (homo)sexuality is obviously a private case; in a language which alternately yields to and reviles the passions it describes, Lawrence expresses a subjective anxiety over the forces of his own desire. It would be a mistake, however, to treat this language as merely idiosyncratic, as simply the product of an individually guilt-ridden sexuality; the lesson of Foucault is that all such language is conditioned and penetrated by cultural value and that it acquires meaning within an arena defined by relations of power. In the sentence immediately following the paragraph just quoted, Lawrence reminds us that he writes of the Arabs as one "charged by duty to lead them forward and to develop to the highest any movement of theirs profitable to England in her war." In this respect, his description of their sexuality compares with already-established patterns in colonialist writing. Arab women appear here, and throughout Lawrence's narrative, as prostitutes—reduced metonymically to the raddled flesh of their bodies or to the serialized and interchangeable currency of a sordid commerce. There is no notion of Arab women as the wives, sisters, and mothers of Lawrence's own passionate followers. As for these men themselves, their "hot limbs in supreme embrace" recall the "fiery splendour" and "burning limbs" of Freiligarth's allegorized Africa. The "yielding sand" of Lawrence's image suggests that an uncontrolled human sexuality finds complicity in the Arab landscape. Finally, the images of bodily degradation carry on the theme of sexual violence and cruelty we have seen in other writers. Whatever the nature of Lawrence's own sexuality, his discourse shares in the Western tradition that symbolically constructs the Orient in terms of sexual danger.

In writers like Stanley and Lawrence we find individual and complex examples of an anxiety which surfaces in various discursive modes through the history of European colonialism and which finds its expression in language that, either explicitly or symbolically, refers to non-Western peoples as given over to unrestrained promiscuity and debilitating sexual excess. Sir Richard Burton, the Victorian explorer, travel writer, and expert on Oriental erotica, merely affirms the conventional wisdom of his age in claiming that "in damp-hot climates . . . the sexual requirements of the passive exceed those of the active sex; and the result is a dissolute social state, contrasting with mountain countries, dry-cold and damp-cold, where the conditions are equally balanced or reversed" (1:379). Writing in this case on Zanzibar, Burton establishes a familiar correlation connecting tropical geography, the ascendancy of female sexual desire, and corruption in the social sphere. His language demonstrates not only the myth-making function of colonial discourse, but its strategic value as well: by joining sexual excess—especially female—to the decadence of non-Western peoples and their institutions, he implies the need for European intervention as a regulating force.

The anxiety over the sexual passions of colonized peoples historically has been heightened by a more concrete fear of their procreative energies. Writing on South Africa in 1903, John Buchan sounds the alarm:

> The Kaffir, south of the Zambesi, already outnumbers the white man by fully five to one, and he increases with at least twice the rapidity. . . . What is to be the end of this fecundity? Living on little, subject apparently to none of the natural or prudential checks on over-population, there seems a real danger of black ultimately swamping white by mere gross quantity. (1903:296)

In Flaubert's *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1874), the third-century mystic is visited by a nightmarish vision of "pygmees," verminlike little men who proclaim defiantly, "We are burned, drowned, and crushed only to return, all the livelier and more numerous—terrible in our quantity!" (265). In a rhetorical phenomenon recalling the tale of the sorcerer's apprentice, the reduction of colonized peoples to mere ciphers leads to their infinite multiplication, returning to haunt the colonizer with a vengeance. This serializing strategy combines with the conventional imagery of the native quarters as foul and breeding swarms, as swamplike spawning grounds of unnatural fecundity. If the eroticization of Africa or the Orient at times evokes the lure of earth and fire—of yielding sands, burning limbs, and fiery splendour—it is equally capable of drawing its vision from the crude, viscous material of filth and degradation. Insofar as it conceives its object

as both sexual and feminine, the colonialist imagination swings wildly between two extremes: the gorgeous apparition of the African queen and the raddled meat of the camp follower.

As I have suggested, these features of the colonizing imagination survive in the postcolonial era, although transformed and adapted to a modern usage which is sometimes indirect in its reference to traditional myths. During the period of media attention focused on the Ethiopian famine in 1985, a syndicated Wright cartoon appeared on the editorial pages of many American newspapers. This cartoon consists of four frames devoted to the monologue of a starving black child—the figure of shriveled limbs, bloated belly, and hollow eyes which has become a kind of media icon. Facing the reader in a series of helpless gestures, the child speaks. First frame: "Africa's problem is very simple. We make babies and they starve to death." Second frame: "We make more babies and they starve to death." Third frame: "We repeat the cycle over and over again." Fourth frame: "This is called the rhythm method" (*Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 1985).

The newspaper cartoon, with its reliance on caricature, cliché, and the simplest common denominators of popular mythology, often serves as the perfect medium for the dissemination of a colonialist ideology. In this instance the editorial cartoon is adapted to the serial form of the comic strip in a device that promotes the idea of an endless and uncontrolled repetition of African sexual activity, a sexuality bound inexorably to death. The punch line of the cartoon relies on a *triple entendre* spectacular in its racist overtones: on one hand, the reference to the "rhythm method," a practice of contraception and sexual regulation related to the concept of sin, emphasizes the difference between Western restraint and African profligacy; on the other, the phrase evokes the eroticizing stereotype of Africans who "have rhythm," whose expression takes the unique form of bodily movement and sexual gesture. And finally, the generation of human life in Africa is reduced to the inexorable rhythms of nature itself, what Eliot calls "Birth, and copulation, and death" (80). In an earlier chapter we saw how writing on the AIDS virus had constructed Africa as a machine for the production of that disease. A similar metaphorical construction operates in this case: the African, defined solely as body and caught up in an endless cycle of overreproduction and starvation, is a machine of sex and death.

One may compare this image of African sexuality to the one conveyed in V. S. Naipaul's 1984 article in the *New Yorker* on the Ivory Coast. There Naipaul's informant is a black woman from Martinique named Arlette, who "was to make me understand many things about the country." Citing this source, Naipaul writes that prostitution is a kind of sport among female

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12

Orientalism

EDWARD W. SAID*

ON A VISIT to Beirut during the terrible civil war of 1975–1976 a French journalist wrote regretfully of the gutted downtown area that 'it had once seemed to belong to ... the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval' (Desjardins 1976: 14). He was right about the place, of course, especially so far as a European was concerned. The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing; in a sense it had happened, its time was over. Perhaps it seemed irrelevant that Orientals themselves had something at stake in the process, that even in the time of Chateaubriand and Nerval Orientals had lived there, and that now it was they who were suffering; the main thing for the European visitor was a European representation of the Orient and its contemporary fate, both of which had a privileged communal significance for the journalist and his French readers. ...

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. In contrast, the American understanding of the Orient will seem considerably less dense, although our recent Japanese, Korean, and Indochinese adventures ought now to be creating a more sober, more realistic 'Oriental' awareness. Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of that Orient.

* From *Orientalism* New York: Random House, 1978.

It will be clear to the reader . . . that by Orientalism I mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent. The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist – either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. Compared with *Oriental studies* or *area studies*, it is true that the term *Orientalism* is less preferred by specialists today, both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European colonialism. Nevertheless books are written and congresses held with 'the Orient' as their main focus, with the Orientalist in his new or old guise as their main authority. The point is that even if it does not survive as it once did, Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental.

Related to this academic tradition, whose fortunes, transmigrations, specializations, and transmissions are in part the subject of this study, is a more general meaning for Orientalism. Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on. *This* Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx. A little later in this introduction I shall deal with the methodological problems one encounters in so broadly construed a 'field' as this.

The interchange between the academic and the more or less imaginative meanings of Orientalism is a constant one, and since the late eighteenth century there has been a considerable, quite disciplined – perhaps even regulated – traffic between the two. Here I come to the third meaning of Orientalism, which is something more historically and materially defined than either of the other two. Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*, to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and

even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity 'the Orient' is in question. How this happens is what this book tries to demonstrate. It also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self. . . .

I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either. We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other. Having said that, one must go on to state a number of reasonable qualifications. In the first place, it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality. . . . There were – and are – cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly. But the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient. . . .

A second qualification is that ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created – or, as I call it, 'Orientalized' – and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. . . .

This brings us to a third qualification. One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow

6 From Orientalism

Edward Said

[...]

II

I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either. We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.

Having said that, one must go on to state a number of reasonable qualifications. In the first place, it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality. When Disraeli said in his novel *Tancred* that the East was a career, he meant that to be interested in the East was something bright young Westerners would find to be an all-consuming passion; he should not be interpreted as saying that the East was *only* a career for Westerners. There were – and are – cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly. But the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its

From Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1978, pp. 4–15, 201–11, 329, 343.

ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient. My point is that Disraeli's statement about the East refers mainly to that created consistency, that regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient, and not to its mere being, as Wallace Stevens's phrase has it.

A second qualification is that ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created, as I call it, 'Orientalized' – and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K. M. Panikkar's classic *Asia and Western Dominance*.[1] The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be* – that is, submitted to being – *made* Oriental. There is very little consent to be found, for example, in the fact that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. *He* spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was 'typically Oriental'. My argument is that Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem was not an isolated instance. It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled.

This brings us to a third qualification. One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be). Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability. After all, any system of ideas that can remain unchanged as teachable wisdom (in academies, books, congresses, universities, foreign-service institutes) from the period of Ernest Renan in the late 1840s until the present in the United States must be something more formidable than a mere collection of lies. Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied – indeed, made truly productive – the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture.

Gramsci has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary (or at least rational and noncoercive) affiliations like schools, families and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracy) whose role in the polity is direct domination. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far. Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe,[2] a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter.

In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. And why should it have been otherwise, especially during the period of extraordinary European ascendancy from the late Renaissance to the present? The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because *he could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part. Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character. Additionally, the imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projections. If we can point to great Orientalist works of genuine scholarship like Silvestre de Sacy's *Chrestomathie arabe* or Edward William Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, we need also to note that Renan's and Gobineau's racial ideas came out of the same impulse, as did a great many Victorian pornographic novels (see the analysis by Steven Marcus of 'The lustful Turk'[3]).

And yet, one must repeatedly ask oneself whether what matters in Orientalism is the general group of ideas overriding the mass of material – about which who could deny that they were shot through with doctrines of European superiority, various kinds of racism, imperialism and the like, dogmatic views of 'the Oriental' as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction? – or the much more varied work produced by almost uncountable individual writers, whom one would take up as individual instances of authors dealing with the Orient. In a sense the two alternatives, general and particular, are really two perspectives on the same material: in both instances one would have to deal with pioneers in the field like William Jones, with great artists like Nerval or Flaubert. And why would it not be possible to employ both perspectives together, or one after the other? Isn't there an obvious danger of distortion (of precisely the kind that academic Orientalism has always been prone to) if either too general or too specific a level of description is maintained systematically?

My two fears are distortion and inaccuracy, or rather the kind of inaccuracy produced by too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localized focus. In trying to deal with these problems I have tried to deal with [. . .] aspects of my own contemporary reality that seem to me to point the way out of the methodological or perspectival difficulties I have been discussing, difficulties that might force one, in the first instance, into writing a coarse polemic on so unacceptably general a level of description as not to be worth the effort, or in the second instance, into writing so detailed and atomistic a series of analyses as to lose all track of the general lines of force informing the field, giving it its special cogency. How then to recognize individuality and to reconcile it with its intelligent, and by no means passive or merely dictatorial, general and hegemonic context?

III

end excerpts

Cvetkovich, Ann. MIXED FEELINGS: Feminism, Mass Culture, & Victorian Sensationalism. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1992.

Three

Detective in the House: Subversion and Containment in *Lady Audley's Secret*

Although it has received little attention from literary critics until recently, *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon was one of the best-selling novels, not only of the 1860s but of the entire latter half of the nineteenth century. It is one of the most important novels of the sensation genre, which emerged as a successor to and composite of forms such as the gothic novel, the Newgate novel, and the stage melodrama.[1] The sensation novel is distinct as a genre from its precursors because its crimes and mysteries occur, not in foreign countries or wild landscapes, not among the lower classes or the inhabitants of monasteries and convents, but in the stately homes of the aristocracy, whose lives are depicted in realistic detail. Rather than relegating terror to the exotic fringes of society, the sensation novel exploits the disparity between apparently stable families and marriages and the horrifying secrets and extremes of passion that disrupt them, in recognition (in the words of Henry James) that the "most mysterious of mysteries" are "at our own doors."[2] This constitutive principle of the genre is elaborated in *Lady Audley's Secret* itself:

> What do we know of the mysteries that may hang about the houses we enter? Foul deeds have been done under the most hospitable roofs; terrible crimes have been committed amid the fairest scenes, and have left no trace upon the spot where they were done. I do

> not believe in mandrake, or in bloodstains that no time can efface. I believe rather that we may walk unconsciously in an atmosphere of crime, and breathe none the less freely. I believe that we may look into the smiling face of a murderer, and admire its tranquil beauty.[3]

As the last sentence suggests, the genre's concern with the deceptiveness of domestic tranquillity is linked to its representation of women. Lady Audley, whose defining characteristics are her golden-haired beauty and her capacity to commit murder, represents the genre in microcosm; the impossibility of recognizing her wickedness from her appearance adds to her power both to fascinate and to threaten others. Only the special skill of the detective can reveal her character. Whereas gothic novels depict the trials of courtship and threats to the purity of virgin heroines, sensation novels are more likely to represent marriage and to show women who produce evil rather than suffer from it. Plots revolve around the legal status of marriage, and the conflicts created by property and inheritance laws. The crime most peculiar to the sensation novel is bigamy, an offense in which a sexual relation or romance is directly under the jurisdiction of the law, and in which illicit passion infects marriage from within, rather than, as with adultery, from without.[4] The genre creates sensationalism by locating crime where one would least expect it—not only in the home but in the actions of a woman—and in the process violates the separation of the private and public spheres crucial to Victorian culture. According to both Victorian and contemporary critics, the affective power of the sensation novel's transgressive heroines has subversive tendencies.

The Sensational Portrait of a Lady

The Victorian critics, for example, were especially vehement about the sensation novel's dangerous portrayal of women whose sexuality and affects are uncontrolled. The figure of the criminal and sexualized woman, by violating the standards of feminine propriety, also threatened the social order. One critic remarked:

> There is nothing more violently opposed to our moral sense, in all the contradictions to custom which they present to us, than the utter unrestraint in which the heroines of this order are allowed to expatiate and develop their impulsive, stormy, passionate characters. We believe it is one chief among their many dangers to youthful readers that they open out a picture of life free from all the perhaps irksome checks that confine their own existence. . . . The heroine of this class of novel is charming because she is undisciplined, and the victim of impulse; because she has never known restraint or has cast it aside, because in all these respects she is below the thoroughly trained and tried woman.[5]

The emphasis here on the danger of "impulse" that is "undisciplined" or without "restraint" reveals the link made between the unleashing of affect, especially in women, and threats to the social order. Psychic discipline becomes the prerequisite to moral and social stability, and women in particular bear the burden of representing virtue as the control of desire. In addition to gender difference, class difference is also implicitly represented in terms of the control of affect; although lower- or working-class women might not be sufficiently refined to manage their impulses, the sign of the middle-class woman's status is her ability to do so. As another critic's remarks about Lady Audley suggest, the woman who does not behave appropriately is unthinkable because femininity is so closely attached to sexual propriety:

> Lady Audley is at once the heroine and the monstrosity of the novel. In drawing her, the authoress may have intended to portray a female Mephistopheles; but, if so, she should have known that a woman cannot fill such a part. The nerves with which Lady Audley could meet unmoved the friend of the man she had murdered, are the nerves of a Lady Macbeth who is half unsexed, and not those of the timid, gentle, innocent creature Lady Audley is represented as being. . . . All this is very exciting; but is also very unnatural. The artistic faults of this novel are as grave as the ethical ones. Combined, they render it one of the most noxious books of modern times.[6]

According to this critic, the novel violates the natural relation between femininity and affect; Lady Audley's crime is that she lacks the affect appropriate to her sex, facing her enemies cold-bloodedly with "the nerves of a Lady Macbeth who is half unsexed." Uncomfortable with the discrepancy between Lady Audley's innocent appearance and her behavior, the critic declares her to be an aesthetic and ethical abomination. The claim that the sensation novel produces an "unnatural" excitement is thus grounded in assumptions about the naturalness of gender roles.

It is precisely this threat to gender difference that contemporary feminist critics have seized upon as the source of the sensation novel's appeal and subversiveness. Responding to criticism that sees the sensation novel as a minor and inferior genre, either blandly conventional or irrelevant to cultural and literary analysis, Elaine Showalter argues that the sensation novel gives expression to the violent passions and frustrations of women whose lives are occupied exclusively by romance and the home. She writes: "The sensationalists made crime and violence domestic, modern, and suburban; but their secrets were not simply solutions to mysteries and crimes; they were the secrets of women's dislike of their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers. These women novelists made a powerful appeal to the female audience by subverting the traditions of feminine fiction to suit their own imaginative impulses, by expressing a wide range of suppressed female emotions, and by tapping and satisfying fantasies of protest and escape."[7] Whereas the Victorian critics deplored women's expression of feeling, the contemporary feminist critic celebrates it; both, however, have assumed the repressive hypothesis, equating the unleashing of suppressed feelings with rebellion against social convention. Showalter's discussion of *Lady Audley's Secret* focuses on Lady Audley as the figure who defies conventional expectations by appearing to be demure and innocent when in fact she is capable of the "unfeminine assertiveness" required to commit bigamy, murder, and arson. She argues that the female reader identifies with "a new kind of heroine, one who could put her hostility toward men into violent action."[8] The secret that lies behind the novel's sensational mystery is that Lady Audley is neither insane nor criminal, but instead acts out of rational self-interest to protect her livelihood. Abandoned by her first husband, George Talboys, she commits bigamy because marriage is her only means to economic security. When he returns, she manages to take control of events and get rid of him; murder stands in for divorce, which was only beginning to be an imaginable solution to unhappy marriages and was still very difficult to obtain. Thus, Showalter argues that "as every woman reader must have sensed, Lady Audley's real secret is that she is *sane* and, moreover, representative."[9]

At the same time as Lady Audley's crimes satisfy female readers' fantasies of rebellion and affective expression, her sensational appeal within the narrative is also the product of a masculine fantasy about women's hidden powers. The story is largely told from the perspective of Robert Audley, the nephew who becomes a detective to investigate his aunt's mysterious past. The narrative rarely provides access to Lady Audley's inner life or point of view; instead its sensationalism emerges from descriptions of the haunting

beauty that belies the heroine's criminal behavior. The power of Lady Audley's image is evident in one of the novel's more sensational scenes, in which Robert Audley and his friend George sneak into Lady Audley's private chambers, which have been locked in her absence. As if entering the womb that will reveal the mysteries of femininity, they creep along a "secret passage" to find a series of rooms cluttered with "womanly luxuries" (46). They discover not the woman herself, but an excess of the accessories that signify her femininity. "The atmosphere of the room was almost oppressive for the rich odors of perfumes . . . handsome dresses lay in a heap upon the ground . . . jewelry, ivory-backed hair-brushes, and exquisite china were scattered here and there" (46). Their quest culminates in the opportunity to examine the pre-Raphaelite portrait of Lady Audley, which hangs in the antechamber. Rather than confront Lady Audley herself, they seek the safety of a representation to satisfy their curiosity about the mysterious lady of the house; Robert explains, "I would give anything to see it, for I have only an imperfect notion of her face" (45).

The portrait shows Lady Audley as a "beautiful fiend" not because she in unfeminine but because the marks of her femininity are exaggerated:

> No one but a pre-Raphaelite would have so exaggerated every attribute of that delicate face as to give a lurid brightness to the blonde complexion, and a strange, sinister light to the deep blue eyes. . . . It was so like, and yet so unlike. It was as if you had burned strange-colored fires before my lady's face, and by their influence brought out new lines and new expressions never seen before. The perfection of feature, the brilliancy of coloring, were there; but I suppose the painter had copied quaint mediaeval monstrosities until his brain had grown bewildered, for my lady, in his portrait of her, had something of the aspect of a beautiful fiend. Her crimson dress, exaggerated like all the rest in this strange picture, hung about her in folds that looked like flames, her fair head peeping out of the lurid mass of color as if out of a raging furnace. (47)

Sensational representation is as much the domain of the male artist as of the female novelist. The lurid exaggeration of Lady Audley's beauty makes her frightening but also fascinating as she becomes the object of the male viewer's voyeurism. Once accentuated, the signs of her femininity—her blue eyes, her crimson dress, her fair hair—reveal her capacity to be a demon, confirming male suspicions of her dangerous powers. The fantasy of the beautiful woman as evil has its dividends for men as well as women.

By the end of the novel Lady Audley's rebellion is diagnosed as madness and she is exiled to an institution in Belgium to die of "maladie de langueur," while Robert Audley reestablishes the ideal of family life in "a dream of a fairy cottage" (285). By casting Lady Audley as a beautiful fiend, just as the pre-Raphaelite painter does, Robert Audley exorcises the threat she is taken to represent and consolidates the patriarchal family.

The portrait's fascinating allure, both for the men in the novel and for the readers of Braddon's description, lies in the ambiguities of its portrayal of Lady Audley's beauty. It at once reveals and obscures her "true" nature and identity. The portrait is an emblem of how sensational representations work more generally; Braddon's insistent focus on her heroine's appearance seduces the reader with both the possibility *and* the impossibility of making visible the contradictions that mark Lady Audley's identity. I have suggested that sensationalism derives its power from rendering concrete or visible what would otherwise be hidden; the image of the beautiful and transgressive woman becomes sensational when we know that she is evil and we both see and don't see her criminality in her appearance. If Lady Audley looked as evil as she supposedly is, she would be less sensational. (Her mother's insanity, for example, is more rather than less unsettling when it turns out that she has the appearance of a golden-haired child rather than a madwoman.) The sensation of repulsion produced by Lady Audley's criminality is indistinguishable from the fascination produced by her beauty; sensationalism consists in the indistinguishability of the two feelings. The *meaning* of the sensation or affect is thus constructed rather than natural, and the representation that produces it can signify both female transgression and its containment. The fact that neither sensational representations nor the feelings they produce have natural meanings is frequently obscured, however. Representations of beautiful and mysterious women seem naturally sensational, for example, because they engage the apparently natural erotic appeal of female beauty.

Subversion and the Critics

If the sensational paradox of the beautiful but evil woman can be used both to reinforce and to challenge ideologies of gender and affect, the critic's task is a difficult one. In particular, politically engaged critics, such as Marxists or feminists, who have an investment in literature's potential to subvert or resist dominant ideologies have to contend with the fact that the figure of the mysterious or criminal woman has just as often been mobilized in order

to control femininity as to undermine it.[10] More skeptical of literature's oppositional functions, Foucauldian critics have provided useful challenges to claims that transgressive or outlaw figures are subversive. D. A. Miller's work has been one of the more prominent instances of a Foucauldian approach to the nineteenth-century novel, and his discussion of *Bleak House,* for example, offers a theory of the detective novel, one of the genres *Lady Audley's Secret* draws on, that implicitly challenges Showalter's feminist assessment of the sensation novel. Working from the view that literature contributes to rather than critiques dominant ideology and existing structures of power, Miller suggests that the detective plot functions to simplify complex social issues, an argument that implies that popular genres displace and efface real problems:

> The detective story gives obscurity a name and a local habitation: in that highly specific "mystery" whose ultimate uncovering motivates an equally specific program of detection. . . . In relation to an organization so complex that it often tempts its subjects to misunderstand it as chaos, the detective story realizes the possibility of an easily comprehensible version of order. And in the face—or facelessness—of a system where it is generally impossible to assign responsibility for its workings to any single person or group of persons, where even the process of victimization seems capricious, the detective story performs a drastic simplification of power as well. For unlike Chancery, the detective story is fully prepared to affirm the efficacy and priority of personal agency, be it that of the criminal figures who do the work of concealment or that of the detective figures who undo it.[11]

Miller suggests that the detective plot "solves" complex social problems by rewriting them in simpler terms; once good and evil become readily identifiable entities, evil can be exorcized.

In *Lady Audley's Secret,* for example, Lady Audley is the interloper whose insane behavior threatens the family; by uncovering the secret of her past and consigning her to the madhouse, the novel renders the family safe. Negotiating the tensions between marriage as an economic contract and marriage as an affective bond, the novel scapegoats her for the threat posed to the stability of marriage and the family when either impulse (economic gain or sexual desire) operates to exclude the other. A woman like Lady Audley can take advantage of a man and marry for money rather than love. And blindly infatuated men like Sir Michael and George can choose

inappropriate objects of desire. Their desires (implicitly sexual) are figured as madness, "this fever, this longing, this restless, uncertain miserable hesitation, . . . this frenzied wish to be young again" (5). Such desire threatens social divisions when it leads men to choose women, such as Helen Talboys or Lucy Graham, who are outside their class. Yet, ultimately the blame for this error falls upon Lady Audley, whose beauty bewitches and tempts the helpless men. The novel is obsessed with the dangers of excessive passion and sexual madness, but it rewrites this dilemma as the problem of an individual woman's murderous instincts and inherited madness.

The construction of Lady Audley as the repository of dangerous secrets and impulses mobilizes Robert Audley's detective work, which controls the intrusions of this deceptive woman; he has the power to discover truth and administer the law. In an age before psychoanalysis, the detective, the new professional required by the law's intrusion into the family, sought out the family's tensions, its sexual undercurrents, its madwoman (the hysteric's precursor).[12] As the doctor with whom Audley consults in order to diagnose Lady Audley as insane remarks, "Physicians and lawyers are the confessors of this prosaic nineteenth century" (246). Just as the confessional function of the doctor culminates in the production of the psychoanalyst, so the conversion of lawyers into detectives disguises a new form of social control, allowing for a deinstitutionalized, private, and resolvable inquiry into the family. Read according to Miller's model, the detective plot in *Lady Audley's Secret* operates to explore and defuse domestic anxieties.

At the same time, however, detection and the family intersect differently in *Lady Audley's Secret* than they do in *Bleak House*. Miller argues that *Bleak House* uses the detective plot to create an alternative to the interminable processes of Chancery. The detective police represent an institution of power that, unlike Chancery, is containable and that guarantees the possibility of a sphere outside of the jurisdiction of the law, such as the family. Ultimately, *Bleak House* attempts to dissociate itself from this model too, using the dichotomy it establishes between Chancery and the police, which is aligned with the distinction between an unclosed narrative and the detective plot, to claim that its own narrative system is different from either alternative. In contrast, *Lady Audley's Secret,* for all its simplifications, doesn't separate detection from the family, producing no thematic or formal difference between public and private realms, or between realist and detective narratives. Because detection occurs in its midst, the family can no longer serve as a refuge and instead becomes the scene of conflict and anxiety. And rather than being a figure with untroubled authority, like Inspector Bucket,

Robert Audley, the detective, doubts his knowledge, efficacy, and motives. Even as it attempts to rewrite the tensions of domestic life in manageable terms, *Lady Audley's Secret* has a far from utopian view of the family, revealing it as a site of relations of power that involve both gender and class.[13] The novel's happy ending, in which the mystery is solved and the family is reconstructed, is less convincing than *Bleak House*'s domestic finale. In *Lady Audley's Secret,* the family is not a refuge from problems that occur elsewhere, but a suddenly healed instance of an institution that has been riddled by conflict throughout the narrative.

Lady Audley's Secret might also seem more subversive than *Bleak House* because Braddon dares to represent her heroine as an unrepentant criminal. Lady Dedlock's story in Dickens's novel could easily provide the material for a sensation novel, but rather than killing the man who threatens to expose her shady past, she becomes the suffering heroine of a maternal melodrama and dies in a lurid episode that resembles the climax of Mrs. Henry Wood's *East Lynne*. Unwillingly separated from her illegitimate daughter Esther, Lady Dedlock must pay for her moral redemption as a mother by being killed off in the narrative. And as the suffering mother, not only does she hide her pain under a carefully wrought demeanor of coldness, but she is kept silent even by the narrator. Her cries of anguish, when they finally do break through, remain trapped and unheard deep within the chambers of Chesney Wold:

> As Sir Leicester basks in his library, and dozes over his newspaper, is there no influence in the house to startle him; not to say, to make the very trees at Chesney Wold fling up their knotted arms, the very portraits frown, the very armour stir?
>
> No. Words, sobs, and cries, are but air; and air is so shut in and shut out throughout the house in town, that sounds need be uttered trumpet-tongued indeed by my Lady in her chamber, to carry any faint vibration to Sir Leicester's ears; and yet this cry is in the house, going upward from a wild figure on its knees.
>
> "O my child, my child! Not dead in the first hours of her life, as my cruel sister told me; but sternly nurtured by her, after she had renounced me and told my name! O my child, O my child!"[14]

The chapter ends there, with the narrator providing the secret spectacle of Lady Dedlock's unheard cries for the reader but refraining from moving in more closely to represent her psychic state. Lady Dedlock remains for Dickens a figure; her secret past and deadened exterior represent the dead soul

of the aristocracy. He is unwilling to disrupt that exterior to speak from her point of view, as he does, for example, in the case of Jo. Instead, Lady Dedlock's closely guarded secret becomes a vehicle for the reader's sensational thrills. Most evident in the sadomasochistic relation of surveillance between her and Tulkinghorn, Lady Dedlock's ability to mask her feelings makes her a fascinating mystery. This power is, however, a minimal form of resistance, ultimately one that she cannot maintain and one whose psychic cost is so high it destroys her:

> In truth she is not a hard lady naturally. . . . But so long accustomed to suppress emotion, and keep down reality; so long schooled for her own purposes, in that destructive school which shuts up the natural feelings of the heart, like flies in amber, and spreads one uniform and dreary gloss over the good and bad, the feeling and the unfeeling, the sensible and the senseless; she had subdued even her wonder until now.[15]

Dickens uses Lady Dedlock to promote a politics of affect, suggesting that the aristocracy's suppression of "the natural feelings of the heart" can only lead to destruction. This equation of the repression of feeling with moral and social decay is central to the nineteenth-century novel, and to the sensation novel in particular, and it frequently finds its particular expression in the figure of the silenced woman. Installed within a framework in which a male observer, whether narrator or detective, watches a woman, the spectacle of the suffering woman also makes possible the sensational thrill of uncovering a secret. Suppressed affect provides a vehicle for surveillance, and this apparatus remains hidden behind the lure of that which incites it.

Despite his interest in the sensational power of the woman with a secret, Dickens does not go as far as Braddon and make his heroine a murderer. Within Dickens's narrative, it is unthinkable that Lady Dedlock should be Tulkinghorn's murderer—that job is left to her double, Hortense, who despite her uncanny resemblance to Lady Dedlock, is differentiated from her employer by being a foreigner and a member of the working class. A similar strategy is evident in that other canonical precursor to the sensation novel, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre,* in which the middle-class heroine's more aggressive tendencies are projected onto the insane and racially other Bertha. Braddon's representation of the blond, feminine, and upper-class Lady Audley as capable of attempting murder does constitute a departure from the narrative conventions of mainstream Victorian fiction. Of the three

sensation novels to be discussed in this book, *Lady Audley's Secret* seems the most subversive *if* the sensation novel's subversiveness is a function of its heroine's trangressiveness.

The figure of the mysterious and criminal woman is not, however, intrinsically subversive; it can be deployed both to challenge and to reinforce ideologies of gender and affect. Claims about *Lady Audley's Secret*'s subversiveness might best be understood as strategic responses to other critics and readers. The feminist and Foucauldian approaches exemplified by Showalter and by Miller are not necessarily mutually exclusive, especially since both critics challenge traditional conceptions of literary and aesthetic value. Showalter argues for the subversiveness of the sensation novel in order to foreground the potential value of popular works by women, whereas Miller attacks the assumption that canonical novels criticize their social milieu or processes of representation. Miller's Foucauldian analysis shows how a canonical novel with an ostensibly critical perspective on Victorian society is in many ways implicated in the processes from which it tries to distance itself and less subversive than it might like to be. However, in the analysis of a popular and noncanonical novel such as *Lady Audley's Secret,* exactly the kind of narrative whose limits and blindnesses *Bleak House* might be assumed to transcend, it might be more urgent to see how the text, despite expectations to the contrary, contains subversive elements.[16] The availability of both readings is testimony to the impossibility of separating the mechanisms of subversion and recuperation or designating a particular literary text intrinsically liberatory or reactionary.

Emphasis on subversion or containment in the novel coincides with emphasis on the female criminal or the male detective in *Lady Audley's Secret.* One can read the novel from the detective or masculine point of view as a fantasy of control, surveillance, and power, in which threats to the family can be identified and contained. One can also read it from Lady Audley's or the woman's point of view as a fantasy of rebellion, in which women can take their revenge on a patriarchy that restrains them, and in which madness is a sign of resistance. The latter reading seems to be subsumed to the former by the end of the novel, however, when Lady Audley's rebellion ultimately fails. Less obvious is how Robert Audley's position of power as detective is undercut. Given that his perspective controls the narrative, it seems important not only to show how Braddon's female protagonist subverts traditional roles, but to question the female author's investment in her male protagonist. In doing so, I hope to resolve the apparent conflict between the feminist and Foucauldian paradigms.

end excerpt

CHAPTER 2

The New Woman and the crisis of Victorianism

Sally Ledger

The rise of the New Woman at the *fin de siècle* was symptomatic of an ongoing challenge to the monolithic ideological certainties of mid-Victorian Britain. The New Woman, the New Journalism, the New Criticism, the New Unionism: an emergent ideological epoch is clearly announced by these coinages of the 1880s and 1890s. The collision between the old and the new that characterized the *fin de siècle* marks it as an excitingly volatile transitional period; a time when British cultural politics were caught between two ages, the Victorian and the modern; a time fraught both with anxiety and with an exhilarating sense of possibility.

The recurrent theme of the cultural politics of the *fin de siècle* was instability, and gender was arguably the most destabilizing category. It is no coincidence that the New Woman materialized alongside the decadent and the dandy. Whilst the New Woman was perceived as a direct threat to classic Victorian definitions of femininity, the decadent and the dandy undermined the Victorians' valorization of a robust, muscular brand of British masculinity deemed to be crucial to the maintenance of the British Empire. The significance of the crisis in gender relations at the close of the nineteenth century has not been understated by feminist critics. Most notably perhaps, Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy* explores the sense of imminent anarchy within gender relations which characterized the 1880s and 1890s. Illuminating and well researched as Showalter's study is, it is limited by its virtual exclusion of socio-cultural discourses adjacent to those pertaining to sexuality and gender. Whilst acknowledging that sexual difference was only one of the ideological battlegrounds of the *fin de siècle*, citing the rise of trade unionism, fears of colonial rebellion, urban poverty and homelessness as other destabilizing factors, Showalter chooses largely to ignore these and to concentrate solely on gender relations.[1]

My aim here is to open up and extend the parameters of Showalter's commentary on gender relations at the *fin de siècle* by considering the rise of the New Woman in her relationship with other social and cultural phenomena of the period in a more thorough way than Showalter's volume attempts. By examining the extent to which the emergent, radical socio-cultural phenomena of the *fin de siècle* interacted with one another, and the extent to which they lacked common ideological ground, one of the objects will be to illuminate those political factors which enabled residual elements of the dominant ideology of Victorianism to survive the crisis years at the end of the nineteenth century. The chapter will examine the nature of the relationship between, variously: the New Woman and decadence; the New Woman and the politics of empire; and the New Woman and the nascent socialisms of the late nineteenth century.

As well as exploring the aspirations and limitations of the 'new' socio-cultural phenomena of the *fin de siècle*, my purpose will also be to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between gender politics, class politics and the politics of empire at the close of the nineteenth century. The critical preoccupation of our own *fin de siècle* with the so-called 'holy trinity' of gender, 'race' and class had its origins in the cultural politics of the 1880s and 1890s. By scrutinizing these origins, and the points at which each component part of the trinity intersected, an analysis of the tensions between the cultural politics of gender, 'race' and class at the end of the nineteenth century can elucidate the current, ongoing critical debates around these issues within cultural theory.

The New Woman as a category was by no means stable: the relationship between the New Woman as a discursive construct and the New Woman as a representative of the women's movement of the *fin de siècle* was complex, and by no means free of contradictions. The gap between ideological projection and social praxis was often considerable. Even within discourse the New Woman was not a consistent category. Whilst medico-scientific discourse, for example, concentrated on the threat she apparently posed to women's role as mothers, anti-feminist fictional discourse frequently constructed her as a sexual decadent. The New Woman writers themselves did not always agree on who or what the New Woman was: whilst Sarah Grand championed sexual purity and motherhood in *The Heavenly Twins*, Mona Caird's attack on motherhood in *The Daughters of Danaus* is devastating. Grant Allen's heroine in *The Woman Who Did*

is a champion of free love, in contrast to the more sexually circumspect heroines of Grand's novels.[2] The constitutional feminists of the late nineteenth century saw themselves neither as campaigners against motherhood nor as sexual radicals, but as supporters of female suffrage.

The elusive quality of the New Woman of the *fin de siècle* clearly marks her as a problem, as a challenge to the apparently self-identical culture of Victorianism which could not find a consistent language by which she could be categorized and dealt with. All that was certain was that she was dangerous, a threat to the *status quo*.

In the discursive sphere the New Woman was frequently figured alongside the decadent, and it was for this reason that the fate of the New Woman of the 1890s was inextricably linked with the public disgracing of Oscar Wilde. On 25 May 1895, Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labour for committing acts of 'gross indecency'.[3] On 21 December 1895, *Punch* triumphantly announced 'THE END OF THE NEW WOMAN – The crash has come at last': Victorian feminism, for this most misogynist of Victorian journals, was on the run.[4] An enormous number of New Woman novels had been published and widely read in the early 1890s, concomitant both with the rise of mass-market fiction and with the resurgence of interest in the Woman Question at the *fin de siècle*. But this deluge of popular New Woman fiction dwindled dramatically after 1895, confirming *Punch*'s prediction at the close of that year. The fictional New Woman was almost certainly a victim of the moral rearguard action which followed the Wilde trials.

Although ideologically they had surprisingly little in common (as Showalter has remarked, they did not perceive themselves to be natural allies[5]) the New Women and the decadents of the *fin de siècle* were repeatedly lumped together in the flourishing periodical press of the 1890s. In 1895 the *Speaker* asserted that 'For many years past Mr Wilde has been the real leader in this country of the "new school" in literature – the revolutionary and anarchist school which has forced itself into such prominence in every domain of art... The new criticism, the new poetry, even the new woman, are all, more or less, the creatures of Mr Oscar Wilde's fancy.'[6] This radical conjunction of the 'new' was seized upon by conservative writers of the period as a threat to the dominant moral, socio-sexual and aesthetic codes of the Victorian age. Eliza Lynn Linton, in an onslaught upon 'The Partisans of the Wild Woman' yoked together the New Journalism, the New Woman and decadence into an unholy trinity of radical degeneration.[7]

What most obviously linked the New Woman with the Wildean decadents of the 1890s was the fact that both overtly challenged Victorian sexual codes. The New Woman fiction is generally characterized by a sexual candour which was also a feature of literary decadence. A writer for the *Westminster Review* speculated that the dominant note of sexuality in all literature of the 1890s was 'a sign that English fiction has entered a stage of decadence'.[8] The attacks on the sexual content of New Woman fiction were of course symptomatic of the discursive explosion around the subject of sexuality in the Victorian years. The fictional New Woman was a product of, rather than a pioneering voice within, this discursive sphere. Although the Victorian age has traditionally been characterized by sexual repression, in fact, as Foucault has pointed out, never before had sex entered into discourse with such vehemence: there was a general discursive erethism surrounding sexuality from the mid-Victorian period onwards.[9] The full-scale entry of sexuality into discourse at this time partly exemplifies the Victorian obsession with taxonomy. Scientifically to classify and medically to analyze sexuality was institutionally to control it, and in this way it is possible to see how Victorian sexual repression and prohibition actually went hand in hand with the discursive explosion around the subject of sex.

The multiple medico-scientific discourses on sexuality in the 1890s were both an instrument and effect of power, the result of a desire to control: but at the same time they operated, in Foucauldian terms, as a point of resistance and a starting point for opposing discursive strategies. The series of attacks on the New Woman and the decadents in the periodical press of the 1890s effectively prised open a discursive space for both of them. How this discursive space was used by the supporters of the New Woman in particular is something which will be addressed further on.

The trials of Oscar Wilde in April and May of 1895 crystallized in the general cultural psyche the challenge to gender definitions posed by the decadents and the New Woman, and the immediate result was an attempt both to ridicule and to silence them. The second Wilde trial began on 26 April 1895, and on 27 April *Punch* published a diatribe against 'Sexomania', written 'By an Angry Old Buffer':

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.
THE NEW WOMAN.
"You 're not leaving us, Jack! Tea will be here directly!"
"Oh, I 'm going for a Out of Tea in the Servants' Hall. I can't get on without Female Society, you know!"

Figure 1.

When Adam delved and Eve span
No one need ask which was the man.
Bicycling, footballing, scarce human,
All wonder now, 'Which is the woman?'
But a new fear my bosom vexes;
Tomorrow there may be no sexes!
Unless, as end to all the pother,
Each one in fact become the other.[10]

New Women on bicycles, garbed in bloomers – a product of the campaign for rational dress at the *fin de siècle* – fill this Old Buffer with fears that the counterpart of the effeminate man was the unwomanly woman. New Women and feminists in general were often constructed in the periodical press as mannish, over-educated, humourless bores. The Girton Girl was much maligned and ridiculed throughout the period. Severely dressed, wearing college ties, and smoking, the New Women in a *Punch* cartoon from 1895 (figure 1) are presumably discussing the books which are on the table whilst the man of the house escapes to the servants' hall for a cup of tea and a gossip. Here, as elsewhere, the specificity of the New Woman as a product of the

Figure 2 'The Woman Who Wouldn't Do', *Punch*, 30 March 1895.

middle and upper classes is clear (I shall return to this further on). Cartoon representations of physically masculine New Women in *Punch* were accompanied by pictures of correspondingly effeminate men: figures 2 and 3 are entirely representative of a general trend. Homophobic and misogynist discourses were by no means exclusive to *Punch*, although it is interesting to note the extent to which a satirical discourse was deployed in the attempt to attack and silence all who were perceived to have transgressed prescribed Victorian gender codes in the 1890s. Eliza Lynn Linton among many others was also quick to challenge the masculinity of those men who actually supported the New Woman, claiming that 'Their morals are the morals of women, not of men ... Affiliated to the Wild Women and their cause, they are themselves like women in all essentials of mind and character ... The truth is simply this – THE UNSEXED WOMAN PLEASES THE UNSEXED MAN.'[11]

Figure 3 'From the Queer and Yellow Book', *Punch*, 2 February 1895.

Although both the New Women and Wildean decadents defined themselves against the dominant sexual ideology of the Victorian period, and were connected in the journalistic writings of the time, they actually shared little ideological common ground, a fact which weakened the political clout of both. To lump together all the new movements of the *fin de siècle*, and to hold Wilde responsible for them all, was, as John Stokes has remarked, to be rather too generous to Wilde[12] (and Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* – the so-called 'bible' of English decadence – is in many respects a profoundly misogynist text). This is not to deny that Wilde had one or two feminist credentials, and a sympathetic feminist reading of Wilde and his work could plausibly set him up both as the most radical inhabitant of the discursive space prised open by the erethism surrounding sexuality in the *fin de siècle*, and as a key figure in the perceived

connection between late-Victorian feminism and decadence. Wilde, after all, edited *Woman's World* for two years, changing the title from *Lady's World* and insisting that the paper become less frivolous. He also commissioned articles on feminism and the women's suffrage campaign. As for his own writings, an earlier draft of *The Importance of Being Earnest* apparently cast Gwendoline as a more New Womanish figure than she is in the final version; presumably Wilde changed her because such a casting would be contradictory and inappropriate to the play as a whole, which is not sexually radical.[13] In *A Woman of No Importance*, the puritanical Hester, who believes in democracy, could be seen to be a species of New Woman.

But the possible correlations between Wilde and the New Women of the 1890s cannot be stretched too far. Altogether typical of the response of the feminist press to the trial of Oscar Wilde was an article in the *Woman's Signal* – a feminist newspaper – which welcomed 'The fall of Mr Oscar Wilde and the malodorous decadents' which, the columnist wrote, 'must hearten every mother who, in the love of God, is training her sons to habits of purity and manliness.'[14] Despite the protestations of many of the periodicals of the 1890s, the mainstream women's movement was anxious to distance itself from Oscar Wilde and his followers.

In pragmatic terms, it is easy to see why this should have been the case: to have aligned themselves with Oscar Wilde, who had been publicly disgraced as a sexual deviant, would almost certainly have damaged the feminists' demands for civic and constitutional rights. But the series of outraged denunciations of Wildean decadence which poured from the feminist press of the 1890s is also symptomatic of the absence of any fully articulated discourse on female sexuality – let alone other sexualities – within the mainstream women's movement of the late nineteenth century. Within the Victorian male medical discourse New Women were hardly constructed as sexual subjects at all. It was only towards the close of the century that sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and Richard von Krafft-Ebing associated feminism with a challenge to Victorian constructions of female sexuality.[15] Instead, women's socio-sexual deviance was generally described almost exclusively in terms of the New Woman's supposed rejection of motherhood: female reproduction rather than female sexuality was the main issue in the debate. The first generation New Women of the Victorian age seem by and large to have accepted these medico-scientific parameters of the field of discourse surrounding

female sexuality, inasmuch as that they rarely, in the discursive realm at least, constructed themselves as sexual subjects. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, in an essay in *Hidden From History*, has argued that this silence within feminist discourse of the late nineteenth century was a profoundly disabling inheritance for the second generation of New Women in the twentieth century.[16]

Despite this silence surrounding female sexuality within the mainstream feminist movement, many of the fictional writers of the time had no qualms about constructing the New Woman as a voracious sexual subject. Marie Corelli's best-selling novel of 1895, *The Sorrows of Satan*, presents the New Woman as a dangerously voluptuous sexual libertine: this is the species of New Woman most commonly associated with Wildean decadence.[17] Sybil Elton, the New Woman of the piece, is a 'harpy – a vulture of vice.' She has an enormous sexual appetite which terrifies and disgusts the man she marries, and in her suicide note she blames the New Woman fiction and decadence for her own moral corruption. Sybil is sexually decadent and vampire-like, and the vampire could be another fictional version of the New Woman. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897, was very much a response to the New Woman: there are a number of explicit references to her in the text. Mina Harker, a stereotypically 'good' little Victorian Miss, innocently describes in her diary the tea that she and the angelic Lucy Westenra have eaten together, reflecting that 'we should have shocked [even] the "New Woman" with our appetites.'[18] During the night following the decorous little tea party, Lucy Westenra is bitten in her sleep by Count Dracula, and thereafter develops appetites of a more wanton kind: she is transformed from a blonde-haired innocent into an oversexed vampire, who has to be massacred in the most appalling way by the brave young English men of the piece in order to be removed as a threat to the British 'race'. What this analysis reveals is that whilst the mainstream women's movement of the *fin de siècle* was busy distancing itself from the sexual excesses associated with Wildean decadence and concentrating instead on civic and constitutional rights for women, the popular fictional press often insisted on representing the New Woman as a sexual decadent.

Contemporary with these fictional attacks on the New Woman which constructed her as a sexually rampant monster, many periodical writers of a medico-scientific bent were busy depicting New Women as the mothers of a degenerate 'race', as the breeders of

'monsters'. The 1890s constituted Britain's so-called 'Age of Empire', and notions of 'race' abounded in the intellectual culture of the period. Following the death of General Gordon in Khartoum in 1885, the 1890s were characterized by a perceived threat to Britain's interests abroad, and doubts about the continuation of the British Empire often focused on the necessity of breeding a strong, pure English 'race'. If Wildean decadence threatened British masculinity of the sort represented by the heroic young saviours of Mina Harker in *Dracula*, the New Woman was also frequently presented as a danger to the continuance of the 'race', in the guise of a potential mother of physically weak and mentally feeble children. The crisis in gender definitions was accompanied by – and inextricably linked with – a crisis within the politics of empire. It was, as I've mentioned earlier, the threat to women's reproductive function – the threat to their role as mothers of the 'race' – which was used as ammunition against the New Woman in medico-scientific discourse. Charles Harper, writing in 1894, warned the New Woman that:

> nature, which never contemplated the production of a learned or a muscular woman, will be revenged upon her offspring, and the New Woman, if a mother at all, will be the mother of a New Man, as different indeed, from the present race as possible, but how different, the clamorous females of today cannot expect ... [There is] the prospect of peopling the world with stunted and hydrocephalic children ... and ultimate extinction of the race.[19]

There were plenty of such arguments around at the time. Grant Allen had warned in an 1889 article called 'Plain Words on the Woman Question' that 'many of the most cultivated and able families of the English-speaking race will have become extinct, through the prime error of supposing that an education which is good for men must also be good for women'.[20] *Punch*, as usual, also had something to say on the subject, warning that the New Woman 'made further development in generations to come quite impossible'.[21] At the same time aestheticism and decadence were being attacked as 'this manhood-blighting cant of art', and 'plain sturdy Britons' were urged to rise and defeat the decadents, who were a threat to the strength and purity of the British 'race'.[22]

What emerges here is that the crisis of Victorianism at the *fin de siècle* centred not just on gender issues, but also on the interconnections between gender roles and contemporary anxieties pertaining to the continuation of the 'race' in the best interests of the

British Empire. Laura Marholm Hansson, giving a continental perspective on the New Woman, momentously declared that:

> the many honest people who think they hear in the Woman Movement the memento mori of a race, and the gnawing of the death-worm, are not so far wrong. As it manifests itself outwardly it is a sign of decay and corruption, and where it has produced conditions – or more accurately has grown out of conditions – as in the lauded lands of women's emancipation, the decline of a race is clearly shown.[23]

What is remarkable, and ironic, about the discursive constructions of the New Woman as a threat to the 'race' is that the middle-class feminists of the 1890s themselves had a considerable ideological investment in notions of empire and in the continuance of the 'race', with many of the New Woman writers championing motherhood and ardently supporting purity campaigns. Not least of these was Sarah Grand who originally coined the phrase the 'New Woman' in 1894. In an article written for the *North American Review*, Grand described the New Woman as a morally superior being who was a 'little above' men. The idea was that men should emulate the moral superiority of women, rather than that the New Woman should have the moral freedoms allowed to men. It is perhaps difficult now to see Grand's position as particularly new, in so far as it was almost entirely complicit with the medico-scientific, not to mention Ruskinian, constructions of femininity which abounded in the periodical press of the time; and it certainly has nothing in common with the sexual excesses associated with Wildean decadence. Nonetheless, it is easy to see how Grand's novels would have upset the guardians of Victorian morality, in that they speak the unspeakable, revealing the murky side of masculine sexuality in the Victorian age.

Grand's first novel, *The Heavenly Twins*, was probably the most famous and infamous of the New Woman texts written by women in the 1890s. Published after the furore surrounding the Contagious Diseases Acts, it caused a scandal through its broaching of the subject of venereal disease contracted by unsuspecting wives and their offspring from their promiscuous husbands. Evadne, one of the New Women of the novel, refuses to consummate her marriage when she discovers that her husband has a dubious sexual past. She suffers from sexual frustration and, more important, from the denial of her maternal instinct. Grand is complicit with the notion, articulated by many Victorian medical men, that 'normal' women only have sexual intercourse so as to satisfy their desire for motherhood. Yet at the same time, it *is* made clear that Evadne has to repress her sexual desire for her husband in order to take up a 'pure' position, and it is in the articulation of this repressed desire that the pleasure of the text resides.

Evadne's friend, Edith, contracts syphilis from her husband, gives birth to a syphilitic child and dies from dementia. Edith's sexual ignorance is emphasized: Evadne, by contrast, has studied anatomy and physiology, has read John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women*, and is able to defend herself from the dangers of masculine promiscuity. It was this desire for the sexual education of women which outraged critics and reviewers, as well as the frankness with which the subject of syphilis is treated. And yet again, alongside this radical thread in the novel there is a confirmation of Victorian ideals concerning monogamy and motherhood, which are presented as the norm in the text. Whilst this is undoubtedly a transgressive novel, residual elements of Victorian sexual ideology mark it as a transitional text, caught, like the New Woman of the 1890s herself, between the old and the new, the Victorian and the modern. Grand's own loyalty to traditional sexual codes is revealed in an article of 1896 in which she affirmed the importance of marriage and maternity.[24] More notable still is Grand's persistent emphasis on sexual purity: she was no sexual radical.

The puritanical strand in the feminist politics of the *fin de siècle* – a sexual puritanism which persists to a lesser extent even in the feminist movement of today – provided good fodder for the champions of the British Empire who repeatedly called upon women to be the breeders of a pure, strong British 'race'. Millicent Garrett Fawcett reiterated mainstream feminism's dissociation from any kind of sexual libertarianism when she reviewed Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did*, a New Woman novel whose heroine is an advocate of free love.[25] Fawcett wrote of Allen's relationship with the women's movement that 'He is not a friend, but an enemy, and it is as an enemy that he endeavours to link together the claim of women to citizenship and social and industrial independence with attacks upon marriage and the family.'[26] It is no coincidence that Fawcett wrote this review in 1895. After the Wilde scandal she seems anxious once and for all to distance the Victorian women's movement from the challenges to the dominant sexual ideology of the time. A writer for the *Woman's Signal* made an implicit connection between sexual purity and the defence of empire. In a defence of the New Woman she declaimed:

If lofty purpose, strength of will
To cleanse the world of every ill
Be just a little 'New', dear sir,
'Tis right that we should make a stir.
For God and Home and Land we fight
And God above defends the right.

A patriotic inflection is unmistakable in the stated defence of mother country here. In the same issue of the *Woman's Signal*, another writer, seemingly influenced by Sarah Grand, claimed that 'Women are fortunate in belonging to the less tainted half of the race. Dr Benjamin Ward Richardson tells us that but for this conserving fact it would deteriorate to the point of failure.'[27]

The preoccupation with sexual purity and motherhood in *The Heavenly Twins*, and the desire to re-moralize society through the extermination of disease, both suggest an eugenic subtext to Grand's novel. The eugenics movement was heavily implicated in the new imperialism of the *fin de siècle*; at the same time, eugenics appealed to many feminists because it seemed to offer a channel (and a language) through which women could influence public events. As Penny Boumelha has remarked, eugenics seemed to offer feminists an illusion of power without challenging the existing separation of male and female spheres of influence.[28] The deployment of a eugenic discourse within feminism could be seen as an attempt to appropriate and transform a dominant socio-scientific discourse for subversive feminist ends. It may seem quite reasonable for the marginal or powerless to challenge the dominant discourse by framing their challenge in a language which is meaningful within the hegemonical discourse: to this extent it is understandable that Victorian feminists should challenge the dominant sexual codes with ammunition from within the dominant ideology of the time. Moreover, to speak always within the language of the marginal frustrates those who seek to exercise power. But to inhabit the discursive space of the dominant ideology is also profoundly problematic; in the case of the New Woman writers it severely disabled the radical drift of their project.

The eugenic project is more overt in Menie Muriel Dowie's *Gallia*, a popular New Woman novel from 1895. In this novel the New Woman heroine suppresses the sexual desire she feels for the man she loves on the basis that he is a physically flawed specimen of manhood (he has heart disease), and she chooses instead to marry and mate

with a fit healthy man for whom she feels nothing because, as she puts it, 'I have wanted the father of my child to be a fine, strong, manly man, full of health and strength.'[29] It is in the greater interest of the 'race' that she should marry the healthy male. Notwithstanding its complicity with eugenics, *Gallia* is a challenging, transgressive novel: Gallia's rationale for marrying the 'strong, manly man' is at once socially reactionary *and* a remarkable statement of feminine assertiveness. What she seems to be saying is: 'if I am only of value as a breeding machine, then that is what I will be, and I will not let any other considerations, like love, enter into the equation.'[30] And basing her choice of marriage partner on the logistics of eugenics might seem preferable to the more generally accepted economic factors which influenced middle-class marriages in the Victorian years.

Given the preoccupation with empire in the 1890s, it is fascinating the way in which the post-Darwinian meaning of the word 'race' time and time again becomes inflected with imperialist overtones in the writings of the period. It would thus seem that the eugenics arguments which began to gather momentum in the 1890s were connected in a complex way with Britain's ongoing imperialist project, and many of the New Woman writers showed themselves to be complicit with this. In this context it is significant that alongside the feminist interest in eugenics in the 1890s, at the level of practice there was a general suspension of suffrage activity following the onset of the Boer War at the turn of the century; Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote later that 'Two fires cannot burn together, and the most ardent of the suffragists felt that, while the war lasted, it was not a fitting time to press their own claims and objects.'[31] Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst similarly ceased their struggle for women's suffrage at the outbreak of World War One (another imperialist catastrophe), and dedicated themselves instead to war work and fanatical patriotism, changing the name of the Women's Social and Political Union journal from *The Suffragette* to *Britannia*.[32]

The ideology of imperialism is, of course, powerfully assimilative, its power lying in its ability to override ideological distinctions and oppositions based on class and gender. At the *fin de siècle* the ideology of imperialism succeeded to a not inconsiderable extent in incorporating large sections of the feminist and socialist movements of the day. Henry Hyndman, the leader of the Social Democratic Federation, had asserted in 1883 that he was 'quite content to bear the reproach of chauvinism'. By 1910 he went so far as to admit that

'I am a jingo'.[33] Robert Blatchford's socialist newspaper, *The Clarion*, was unabashedly patriotic. By contrast, William Morris's profound anti-imperialism (he consistently opposed Britain's imperialist policies from the 'Eastern Question' in 1876 onwards) was arguably a socialist exception rather than the rule. The assimilation of substantial parts of the late nineteenth century's feminist and socialist movements into the discourse of imperialism, which was so pervasive in the *fin-de-siècle* years, undermined the radical credentials of both.

Although feminism and socialism both showed themselves to be complicit with the politics of empire in the *fin de siècle*, in other respects they decidedly lacked a common sense of identity. A socialist-feminist novel from 1888, Jane Hume Clapperton's *Margaret Dunmore; or, A Socialist Home*, throws an interesting light on feminism's troubled relationship with the nascent socialisms of the late nineteenth century. Set two years into the future the novel takes the form of a utopia, elaborating a socialist-feminist community set up by the unmarried Margaret Dunmore. The aim of Margaret Dunmore's 'socialist home' is to provide 'a Provincial Communistic Group – ladies and gentlemen who intend to live, rather than preach, Socialism; and who hope to rear children of a purely Socialistic type'.[34] The inspiration of the communitarian Fellowship of the New Life formed by Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis and others at the *fin de siècle* is, of course, evident here. Although the 'socialist home' of the novel enables unmarried women such as Margaret Dunmore to fulfil themselves in roles which do not involve marriage or motherhood, the tensions in traditional bourgeois gender relations when brought up against communitarian living are not altogether resolved. Margaret Dunmore has a close intellectual relationship with Frank Ray, whose wife Rose provides for the more purely domestic and familial areas of his life; Rose becomes jealous of Margaret, and withdrawn from the marriage. There is implicit in the novel a recognition that gender relations will have to be modified under socialism; but at the same time, the fundamentals of bourgeois marriage itself are not challenged. Neither is the problematic relationship between motherhood and participation in political and intellectual life fully hammered out: Monsieur Henri Martin, a revolutionary socialist who continues his work for international socialism whilst living as a community member, believes of Margaret that 'by simple motherhood she would accomplish more for the race than by this regenerative scheme of hers' (p. 56). Again the eugenic

discourse which was so powerful within both feminism and socialism at the *fin de siècle* is evident here, and the novel closes with a vague prescription for a 'conference of mothers' to decide how best to further the interests of the 'race'. The capitalistic division of labour which kept women in the domestic sphere is never fully challenged in the novel either: it is the women of the socialist home who undertake the domestic labour. In the event, Jane Hume Clapperton shows herself to have been more a socialist than a feminist.

There was a decidedly anti-feminist drift within some areas of the late nineteenth-century socialist movement. Whilst H. M. Hyndman was utterly dismissive of feminism and sexual politics, even the more sympathetic marxists and socialists such as Frederic Engels and Edward Carpenter did not ultimately challenge the sexual division of labour.[35] In his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels argued that 'The predominance of the man in marriage is simply a consequence of his economic predominance and will vanish with it automatically.'[36] But Engels failed to offer an analysis of domestic labour, regarding it simply as a part of personal life, irrelevant to women's insertion into waged labour. Edward Carpenter's Fellowship of the New Life included women and was sexually radical; but the fact remained that it was the women of the communities who did most of the housework. In *Love's Coming of Age*, which went through eleven editions between 1896 and 1919, Carpenter traced women's oppression from the introduction of private property. But he, like Engels, accepted the 'naturalness' of the sexual division of labour because of the biological difference between men and women, and he accepted 'masculinity' and 'femininity' as fixed terms.[37]

Robert Blatchford, editor of the popular newspaper *The Clarion*, was one of many socialists hostile to any association between socialism and the sex question. Writing to Edward Carpenter in January 1894, he admitted that sexual relations must change, but that this must come after (rather than as part of) economic and industrial change. His fear was that 'if Socialists identify themselves with any sweeping changes in those relations, the Industrial change will be seriously retarded', and he concluded that 'the time is not ripe to meddle with the sexual question'.[38] In a general way, both the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party regarded the sexual division of labour as natural, and conflict between the sexes was always subordinated to class conflict. Robert Blatchford's immensely popular utopian-socialist essay of 1895, *Merrie England*, shows itself

altogether complicit with the existing sexual division of labour.[39] Whilst Blatchford recognizes the domestic misery of the artisan's wife who is endlessly 'Cooking, cleaning, managing, mending, washing clothes, waiting on husband and children, her work is never done' (p. 45), his solution is not to free women from the yoke of domestic labour, but merely to reorganize it on large-scale, militaristic lines, so that 'We set up one laundry, with all the best machinery; we set up one big drying field; we set up one great kitchen, one general dining hall, and one pleasant tea garden. Then we buy all the provisions and other things in large quantities, and we appoint certain wives as cooks and laundresses, or, as is the case with many military duties, we let the wives take the duties in turn.' (p. 54)

Given the general attitude of the new socialist parties of the *fin de siècle* to feminist issues, it is not surprising that evidence from the feminist periodicals of the day would seem to suggest that there was relatively little sympathy within the 'equal rights' bourgeois women's movement for the various new socialist groupings. It must be added, though, that this is as much attributable to the narrow class identity of the New Woman as to the failure of the new socialist parties to take on board the Woman Question. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) was formed in 1893, and in 1895 Tom Mann gave a speech to the feminist Pioneer Club: the report on his speech in *Shafts*, a feminist newspaper, declared indignantly that 'Tom Mann and the socialists were wrong in trying to drive women back into the home.'[40] There was undeniably a degree of truth in this charge against the ILP.

Notwithstanding the conflicts between the 'equal rights' women's movement and the socialist parties of the 1890s, there had nonetheless long been a sense, sometimes a fear, that the women's movement and socialism were in some way connected. Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Ethics*, published in 1893, had argued that women should be denied access to political activity because their 'propensity to give most where capacity is least' (all very well in the domestic sphere) would 'increase the ability of public agencies to override individual rights in pursuit of what were thought beneficent ends'.[41] As Lorna Duffin has pointed out, this blueprint for political control by women looks suspiciously like a blueprint for socialism. Karl Pearson, a socialist, eugenicist, friend of Olive Schreiner and member of the Men and Women's Club, also made a connection between feminism and socialism by arguing that 'There has never been a Labour

Question without a Woman's Question also,' and he linked the two groups by affirming that 'Both labour and woman are seeking to throw off the slavery arising from economic dependence; both are demanding – it may be in different spheres – that education shall be free; both desire equality and opportunity.'[42]

A substantial number of women were indeed actively involved in the labour movement of the late nineteenth century, and a number of these were feminists. A growing body of research is now devoted to the work of such women. Prominent amongst them was Isabella Ford, New Woman novelist, trade unionist and pioneering member of the ILP. She was by no means alone in adding a woman's voice to the Independent Labour Party, a third of whose members were women. There were a number of feminists at grass-roots level in the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), too, as well as the more prominently placed Olive Schreiner, one of the founders of the SDF's Women's League. Schreiner was also a member, with Havelock Ellis, of the communitarian Fellowship of the New Life, as well as being a pioneering New Woman novelist. Eleanor Marx was another notable socialist feminist whose extensive political work for socialism included setting up foreign language and debating classes for the SDF, translating all the papers for the miners' international conference of 1897,[43] and helping to organize the Gas Workers' Union, one of the new unions of the *fin de siècle* in which women had equal status with men.[44] As a feminist Marx translated Ibsen and *Madame Bovary*, and her lecture on Shelley's socialism stresses the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley on the poet's 'perception of woman's real position'. In the lecture, she reflected that 'The woman is to the man as the producing class is to the possessing.'[45]

By no means a majority of the socialist women of the *fin de siècle* were feminists, though, and this is partly because of the very different social and political preoccupations out of which socialism and feminism grew. Eleanor Marx herself, whilst undoubtedly being a supporter of women's suffrage, owed her primary loyalties – unsurprisingly – to the overcoming of social inequality based on class oppressions. She had grave reservations about the class politics of the equal rights women's movement, caustically remarking that as a social reformer she saw 'no more in common between Mrs Fawcett and a laundress than ... between Rothschild and one of his employees'. Her conclusion was that 'In short, there is for us only the working-class movement.'[46] When it came to the crunch, Marx's

socialism took precedence over her feminism, and she reflected in 1892 that 'If every demand raised by these women [the equal rights feminists] were granted today, we working women would still be just where we were before. Women workers would still work infamously long hours, for infamously low wages, under infamously unhealthful conditions.'[47] Beatrice Webb, another notable female socialist, was ambivalent towards the women's movement. Webb's political sympathies lay with the trade union movement, and she was an ardent supporter, for example, of the 1895 Factory Act which aimed to curb women's employment.

The separation between the feminist and socialist movements of the *fin de siècle* is graphically illustrated, in fact, by the conflict between the women's movement and the trade unionist labour movement over the Factory Acts of the 1890s. Jessie Boucherett's Women's Employment Defence League regarded the acts as a sinister attempt to drive women out of the workforce and back into the home. Yet from the point of view of the labour movement, and its supporters such as Beatrice Webb, society as a whole had an interest in improving conditions of employment. Allowing absolute freedom of action to women whose bargaining position was either weak or non-existent (such women were by and large willing to work however low the wage) would have been to set into reverse the gradually improving material and economic standards of industrial society. Both the representatives of the women's movement, who opposed the Factory Acts of the 1890s, and the labour movement, who supported them, claimed to be on the side of liberty.[48] It was such heroic New Women as Annie Besant who attempted to yoke the two movements together by unionizing women. By and large, though, the common ground between mainstream feminism and the nascent socialist parties in the *fin de siècle* was relatively scarce, and the responsibility for this has to be shared by both political groupings. Whilst the socialist parties had very limited sympathies for the bourgeois women's movement, the relatively narrow demands of that movement, largely based on suffrage, education and property rights, meant that Eleanor Marx's charges contained a good deal of truth. It is noteworthy too that at a time when novelists such as Gissing, Walter Besant, and even Henry James, were concerning themselves with London's slumland, the New Woman novelists tended to recast the social question in terms of the 'pollution' of society by masculine sexuality. This shift in focus away from the naturalistic slumland

fiction of the 1880s was largely a consequence of the specific class identity of the literary advocates of the New Woman, which was emphatically bourgeois and rarely socialist.[49]

The complex dialogue between feminist politics, socialist politics and the politics of empire which was so strongly manifested in the *fin de siècle* is ongoing at the close of the twentieth century. What emerges from an analysis of these issues in the 1880s and 1890s is that the New Woman and her advocates were, although a transgressive socio-cultural force, in many respects complicit with residual elements of the dominant Victorian ideologies concerning gender roles, sexuality, 'race', empire and social class. Although the New Women and the decadents were forced to occupy the same discursive space in the cultural politics of the 1890s, they inhabited it in radically different ways, with little consensus in the realm of sexual politics emerging between them. At the same time, the new socialist parties of the *fin de siècle* failed either to question the sexual division of labour or fully to take on board the Woman Question. The radical socio-cultural and political challenge posed respectively by the New Woman, the decadents and the socialists in the last years of the nineteenth century was ultimately too fragmented to form a coherent alternative ideological programme to that posed by the monolithic grand narrative of Victorianism. The advocates of the New Woman, the decadents and aesthetes, the New Lifers, the new socialist parties and growing trade union movement – all had their particular ideological programmes which, whilst frequently being conflated in the periodical press, in fact shared all too little common ground. Such ideological incompatibility was disabling both for the feminist movement of the *fin de siècle* and for other radicals who were beginning to develop voices of their own at the close of the nineteenth century.

In the postmodern years of the late twentieth century when grand narratives are altogether *passé*, it is perhaps tempting to celebrate rather than to mourn the ideological fragmentations which characterized the radical challenges to Victorianism at the *fin de siècle*. To replace one totality with another might simply lead to a different set of oppressions. Nonetheless, at a time when cultural theory is dominated by issues pertaining to gender, class and 'race', and when the so-called 'new world order' of the late twentieth century is collapsing into a morass of competing nationalisms, with socialism apparently on its knees and feminists having to deal with 'post-feminism', it is surely instructive to scrutinize the fissures and

interrelationships between gender politics, class politics and the politics of empire as they emerged in the late nineteenth century. To the extent that the fissures remain today, the crisis of Victorianism at the *fin de siècle* is a crisis which persists in the final years of our own century.

NOTES

I would like to thank Scott McCracken and Bill Greenslade for reading and commenting on a draft of this essay.

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2 Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* (3 vols., London: William Heinemann, 1893); Mona Caird, *The Daughters of Danaus* (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894); Grant Allen, *The Woman Who Did* (London: John Lane, 1895).
3 For an account of the two trials see Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1988), pp. 462–478.
4 *Punch*, 21 December 1895, p. 297.
5 Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 170.
6 *Speaker*, 13 April 1895, p. 403. Quoted by John Stokes, *In the Nineties* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 14.
7 Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Partisans of the Wild Woman', *Nineteenth Century*, 31 (1892), 463.
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12 Stokes, *In the Nineties*, pp. 14–15.
13 I owe this piece of information to Alan Sinfield, who gave a paper on '"Effeminacy" – Wilde and the Emergence of a Homosexual Identity', at History Workshop 25, Ruskin College, Oxford, November 1991.
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19 Charles G. Harper, *Revolted Woman: Past, Present and to Come* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1894), p. 27.
20 Grant Allen, 'Plain Words on the Woman Question', *Fortnightly Review*, 46 (1889), 455–456.
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23 Laura Marholm Hansson, *Studies in the Psychology of Woman*, tr. Georgia A. Etchinson (Chicago and New York: Herbert S. Stone, 1899), p. 301. Quoted by Linda Dowling, 'The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33 (1979), 447.
24 Sarah Grand, 'The Woman's Question', *Humanitarian*, 8 (1896), 160–169. The article in which the term the 'New Woman' was coined was 'The New aspect of the Woman Question', *North American Review*, 158 (1894), 271–273.
25 For a longer discussion of the campaign for Free Love in the 1890s see David Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 45–47.
26 Millicent Garrett Fawcett, review of *The Woman Who Did*, *Contemporary Review*, 47 (1895), 630.
27 *Woman's Signal*, 3 (January 1895), 26, 27.
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29 Menie Muriel Dowie, *Gallia* (London: Methuen, 1895), p. 321.
30 I am indebted to Scott McCracken for this reading of Gallia's actions in the novel.
31 Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Woman's Suffrage* (London: T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1912), p. 58.
32 Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own*, vol. 2 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 366.
33 H. M. Hyndman, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London: Kegan Paul, 1883), p. 194n; and *Justice*, 3 September 1910, quoted by C. Tsuki, *H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 211.
34 Jane Hume Clapperton, *Margaret Dunmore: or, A Socialist Home* (London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Lowrey, 1888), p. 23.
35 Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life* (London: Pluto Press, 1977), p. 116.
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37 Edward Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age* (1896; reprint New York and London: Mitchell Kennerley, 1911).

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42 Karl Pearson, 'Woman and Labour', *Fortnightly Review*, 29 (May 1894), 563–564.
43 Ruth Brandon, *The New Women and the Old Men* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990), p. 134.
44 Rowbotham and Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life*, p. 18.
45 Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx, *Shelley's Socialism: Two Lectures* (Manchester: Lesley Preger, 1947).
46 Cited in Hal Draper and Anne G. Lipow, 'Marxist Women Versus Bourgeois Feminism', *The Socialist Register* (1976), 224.
47 Ibid., p. 224.
48 For a more detailed discussion of the feminist movement's quarrels with the advocates of the factory acts of the 1890s, see Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes*, chapter 8.
49 One remarkable exception is Margaret Harkness, a novelist who used the pseudonym 'John Law'. For a discussion of her writing see John Goode, 'Margaret Harkness and the Socialist Novel', in Gustave Klaus (ed.) *The Socialist Novel in Britain* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), and John Goode, 'Feminism, Class and Literary Criticism', in Kate Campbell (ed.) *Critical Feminism* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992).

DEGENERATION

BY

MAX NORDAU

1892

Translated from the Second Edition of the
German Work

Introduction by George L. Mosse

University of Nebraska Press
Lincoln and London

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1993

DEDICATED TO

CÆSAR LOMBROSO

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY AND FORENSIC MEDICINE
AT THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF TURIN

BY THE AUTHOR

TO

PROFESSOR CÆSAR LOMBROSO,

TURIN.

DEAR AND HONOURED MASTER,

I dedicate this book to you, in open and joyful recognition of the fact that without your labours it could never have been written.

The notion of degeneracy, first introduced into science by Morel, and developed with so much genius by yourself, has in your hands already shown itself extremely fertile in the most diverse directions. On numerous obscure points of psychiatry, criminal law, politics, and sociology, you have poured a veritable flood of light, which those alone have not perceived who obdurately close their eyes, or who are too short-sighted to derive benefit from any enlightenment whatsoever.

But there is a vast and important domain into which neither you nor your disciples have hitherto borne the torch of your method —the domain of art and literature.

Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists. These, however, manifest the same mental characteristics, and for the most part the same somatic features, as the members of the above-mentioned anthropological family, who satisfy their unhealthy impulses with the knife of the assassin or the bomb of the dynamiter, instead of with pen and pencil.

Some among these degenerates in literature, music, and painting have in recent years come into extraordinary prominence, and are

(and section)

that it is easier to observe them in their composite forms, than each in isolation.

The conception of degeneracy, which, at this time, obtains throughout the science of mental disease, was first clearly grasped and formulated by Morel. In his principal work—often quoted, but, unfortunately, not sufficiently read*—the following definition of what he wishes to be understood by 'degeneracy' is given by this distinguished expert in mental pathology, who was, for a short time, famous in Germany, even outside professional circles.†

'The clearest notion we can form of degeneracy is to regard it as *a morbid deviation from an original type*. This deviation, even if, at the outset, it was ever so slight, contained transmissible elements of such a nature that anyone bearing in him the germs becomes more and more incapable of fulfilling his functions in the world; and mental progress, already checked in his own person, finds itself menaced also in his descendants.'

When under any kind of noxious influences an organism becomes debilitated, its successors will not resemble the healthy, normal type of the species, with capacities for development, but will form a new sub-species, which, like all others, possesses the capacity of transmitting to its offspring, in a continuously increasing degree, its peculiarities, these being morbid deviations from the normal form—gaps in development, malformations and infirmities. That which distinguishes degeneracy from the formation of new species (phylogeny) is, that the morbid variation does not continuously subsist and propagate itself, like one that is healthy, but, fortunately, is soon rendered sterile, and after a few generations often dies out before it reaches the lowest grade of organic degradation.‡

Degeneracy betrays itself among men in certain physical

* *Traité des Dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'Espèce humaine et des Causes qui produisent ces Variétés maladives.* Par le Dr. B. A. Morel. Paris, 1857, p. 5.

† At the instigation of his mistress Ebergenyi, Count Chorinsky had poisoned his wife, previously an actress. The murderer was an epileptic, and a 'degenerate,' in the Morelian sense. His family summoned Morel from Normandy to Munich, for the purpose of proving to the jury, before whom the case (1868) was tried, that the accused was irresponsible. The latter was singularly indignant at this; and the Attorney-General also contradicted, in the most emphatic manner, the evidence of the French alienist, and supported himself by the approbation of the most prominent alienists in Munich. Chorinsky was pronounced guilty. Nevertheless, only a short time after his conviction, insanity developed itself in him, and a few months later he died, in the deepest mental darkness, thus justifying all the previous assertions of the French physician, who had, in the German tongue, demonstrated to a German jury the incompetence of his professional confrères in Munich.

‡ Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 683.

characteristics, which are denominated 'stigmata,' or brand-marks—an unfortunate term derived from a false idea, as if degeneracy were necessarily the consequence of a fault, and the indication of it a punishment. Such stigmata consist of deformities, multiple and stunted growths in the first line of asymmetry, the unequal development of the two halves of the face and cranium; then imperfection in the development of the external ear, which is conspicuous for its enormous size, or protrudes from the head, like a handle, and the lobe of which is either lacking or adhering to the head, and the helix of which is not involuted; further, squint-eyes, hare lips, irregularities in the form and position of the teeth; pointed or flat palates, webbed or supernumerary fingers (syn- and poly-dactylia), etc. In the book from which I have quoted, Morel gives a list of the anatomical phenomena of degeneracy, which later observers have largely extended. In particular, Lombroso* has conspicuously broadened our knowledge of stigmata, but he apportions them merely to his 'born criminals'—a limitation which from the very scientific standpoint of Lombroso himself cannot be justified, his 'born criminals' being nothing but a subdivision of degenerates. Féré† expresses this very emphatically when he says, 'Vice, crime and madness are only distinguished from each other by social prejudices.'

There might be a sure means of proving that the application of the term 'degenerates' to the originators of all the *fin-de-siècle* movements in art and literature is not arbitrary, that it is no baseless conceit, but a fact; and that would be a careful physical examination of the persons concerned, and an inquiry into their pedigree. In almost all cases, relatives would be met with who were undoubtedly degenerate, and one or more stigmata discovered which would indisputably establish the diagnosis of 'Degeneration.' Of course, from human consideration, the result of such an inquiry could often not be made public; and he alone would be convinced who should be able to undertake it himself.

Science, however, has found, together with these physical stigmata, others of a mental order, which betoken degeneracy quite as clearly as the former; and they allow of an easy demonstration from all the vital manifestations, and, in particular, from all the works of degenerates, so that it is not necessary to measure the cranium of an author, or to see the lobe of a painter's ear, in order to recognise the fact that he belongs to the class of degenerates.

* *L'Uomo delinquente in rapporto all' Antropologia, Giurisprudenza e alle Discipline carcerarie.* 3a edizione. Torino, 1884, p. 147 *et seq.* See also Dr. Ch. Féré, 'La Famille nevropathique.' Paris, 1894, pp. 176-212.

† 'La Famille nevropathique,' *Archives de Nevrologie*, 1884, *Nos.* 19 *et* 20.

Quite a number of different designations have been found for these persons. Maudsley and Ball call them 'Borderland dwellers'—that is to say, dwellers on the borderland between reason and pronounced madness. Magnan gives to them the name of 'higher degenerates' (*dégénérés supérieurs*), and Lombroso speaks of 'mattoids' (from *matto*, the Italian for insane), and 'graphomaniacs,' under which he classifies those semi-insane persons who feel a strong impulse to write. In spite, however, of this variety of nomenclature, it is a question simply of one single species of individuals, who betray their fellowship by the similarity of their mental physiognomy.

In the mental development of degenerates, we meet with the same irregularity that we have observed in their physical growth. The asymmetry of face and cranium finds, as it were, its counterpart in their mental faculties. Some of the latter are completely stunted, others morbidly exaggerated. That which nearly all degenerates lack is the sense of morality and of right and wrong. For them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty. In order to satisfy any momentary impulse, or inclination, or caprice, they commit crimes and trespasses with the greatest calmness and self-complacency, and do not comprehend that other persons take offence thereat. When this phenomenon is present in a high degree, we speak of 'moral insanity' with Maudsley;* there are, nevertheless, lower stages in which the degenerate does not, perhaps, himself commit any act which will bring him into conflict with the criminal code, but at least asserts the theoretical legitimacy of crime; seeks, with philosophically sounding fustian, to prove that 'good' and 'evil,' virtue and vice, are arbitrary distinctions; goes into raptures over evildoers and their deeds; professes to discover beauties in the lowest and most repulsive things; and tries to awaken interest in, and so-called 'comprehension' of, every bestiality. The two psychological roots of moral insanity, in all its degrees of development, are, firstly, unbounded egoism,† and, secondly, impulsiveness‡—*i.e.*, in-

* See, on this subject, in particular, Krafft Ebing, *Die Lehre vom moralischen Wahnsinn*, 1871; H. Maudsley, *Responsibility in Mental Disease*, International Scientific Series; and Ch. Féré, *Dégénérescence et Criminalité*, Paris, 1888.

† J. Roubinovitch, *Hystérie mâle et Dégénérescence;* Paris, 1890, p. 62: 'The society which surrounds him (the degenerate) always remains strange to him. He knows nothing, and takes interest in nothing but himself.'

Legrain, *Du Délire chez les Dégénérés;* Paris, 1886, p. 10: 'The patient is . . . the plaything of his passions; he is carried away by his impulses, and has only one care—to satisfy his appetites.' P. 27: 'They are egoistical, arrogant, conceited, self-infatuated,' etc.

‡ Henry Colin, *Essai sur l'État mental des Hystériques;* Paris, 1890, p. 59: 'Two great facts control the being of the hereditary degenerate: obsession [the tyrannical domination of one thought from which a man cannot free

ability to resist a sudden impulse to any deed; and these characteristics also constitute the chief intellectual stigmata of degenerates. In the following sections of this work, I shall find occasion to show on what organic grounds, and in consequence of what peculiarities of their brain and nervous system, degenerates are necessarily egoistical and impulsive. In these introductory remarks I would wish only to point out the stigma itself.

Another mental stigma of degenerates is their emotionalism. Morel* has even wished to make this peculiarity their chief characteristic—erroneously, it seems to me, for it is present in the same degree among hysterics, and, indeed, is to be found in perfectly healthy persons, who, from any transient cause, such as illness, exhaustion, or any mental shock, have been temporarily weakened. Nevertheless it is a phenomenon rarely absent in a degenerate. He laughs until he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion; a commonplace line of poetry or of prose sends a shudder down his back; he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and music especially,† even the most insipid and least commendable, arouses in him the most vehement emotions. He is quite proud of being so vibrant a musical instrument, and boasts that where the Philistine remains completely cold, he feels his inner self confounded, the depths of his being broken up, and the bliss of the Beautiful possessing him to the tips of his fingers. His excitability appears to him a mark of superiority; he believes himself to be possessed by a peculiar insight lacking in other mortals, and he is fain to despise the vulgar herd for the dulness and narrowness of their minds. The unhappy creature does not suspect that he is conceited about a disease and boasting of a derangement of the mind; and certain silly critics, when, through fear of being pronounced deficient in comprehension, they make desperate efforts to share the emotions of a degenerate in regard to some insipid or ridiculous production, or when they praise in exaggerated expressions the beauties which the degenerate asserts he finds therein, are unconsciously simulating one of the stigmata of semi-insanity.

Besides moral insanity and emotionalism, there is to be observed in the degenerate a condition of mental weakness and despondency, which, according to the circumstances of his life, assumes the form of pessimism, a vague fear of all men, and of

himself; Westphal has created for this the good term 'Zwangs-Vorstellung,' *i.e.*, coercive idea] and impulsion—both irresistible.'

* Morel, 'Du Délire émotif,' *Archives générales*, 6 série, vol. vii., pp. 385 and 530. See also Roubinovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

† J. Roubinovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 68: 'Music excites him keenly

BOOK V.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

PROGNOSIS.

Our long and sorrowful wandering through the hospital—for as such we have recognised, if not all civilized humanity, at all events the upper stratum of the population of large towns to be—is ended. We have observed the various embodiments which degeneration and hysteria have assumed in the art, poetry, and philosophy of our times. We have seen the mental disorder affecting modern society manifesting itself chiefly in the following forms: Mysticism, which is the expression of the inaptitude for attention, for clear thought and control of the emotions, and has for its cause the weakness of the higher cerebral centres; Ego-mania, which is an effect of faulty transmission by the sensory nerves, of obtuseness in the centres of perception, of aberration of instincts from a craving for sufficiently strong impressions, and of the great predominance of organic sensations over representative consciousness; and false Realism, which proceeds from confused æsthetic theories, and characterizes itself by pessimism and the irresistible tendency to licentious ideas, and the most vulgar and unclean modes of expression. In all three tendencies we detect the same ultimate elements, viz., a brain incapable of normal working, thence feebleness of will, inattention, predominance of emotion, lack of knowledge, absence of sympathy or interest in the world and humanity, atrophy of the notion of duty and morality. From a clinical point of view somewhat unlike each other, these pathological pictures are nevertheless only different manifestations of a single and unique fundamental condition, to wit, exhaustion, and they must be ranked by the alienist in the genus melancholia, which is the psychiatrical symptom of an exhausted central nervous system.

Superficial or unfair critics have foisted on me the assertion

that degeneration and hysteria are the products of the present age. The attentive and candid reader will bear witness that I have never circulated such an absurdity. Hysteria and degeneration have always existed; but they formerly showed themselves sporadically, and had no importance in the life of the whole community. It was only the vast fatigue which was experienced by the generation on which the multitude of discoveries and innovations burst abruptly, imposing upon it organic exigencies greatly surpassing its strength, which created favourable conditions under which these maladies could gain ground enormously, and become a danger to civilization. Certain micro-organisms engendering mortal diseases have always been present also—for example, the bacillus of cholera; but they only cause epidemics when circumstances arise intensely favourable for their rapid increase. In the same way the body constantly harbours parasites which only injure it when another bacillus has invaded and devastated it. For example, we are always inhabited by staphylococcus and streptococcus, but the influenza bacillus must first appear for them to swarm and produce mortal suppurations. Thus, the vermin of plagiarists in art and literature becomes dangerous only when the insane, who follow their own original paths, have previously poisoned the *Zeitgeist*, weakened by fatigue, and rendered it incapable of resistance.

We stand now in the midst of a severe mental epidemic; of a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria, and it is natural that we should ask anxiously on all sides: 'What is to come next?'

This question of eventuality presents itself to the physician in every serious case, and however delicate and rash, above all, however little scientific any prediction may be, he cannot evade the necessity of establishing a prognosis. For that matter, this is not purely arbitrary, not a blind leap into the dark; the most attentive observation of all the symptoms, assisted by experience, permits a generally just conclusion on the ulterior evolution of the evil.

It is possible that the disease may not have yet attained its culminating point. If it should become more violent, gain yet more in breadth and depth, then certain phenomena which are perceived as exceptions or in an embryo condition would henceforth increase to a formidable extent and develop consistently; others, which at present are only observed among the inmates of lunatic asylums, would pass into the daily habitual condition of whole classes of the population. Life would then present somewhat the following picture:

Every city possesses its club of suicides. By the side of this exist clubs for mutual assassination by strangulation,

hanging, or stabbing. In the place of the present taverns houses would be found devoted to the service of consumers of ether, chloral, naphtha, and hashish. The number of persons suffering from aberrations of taste and smell has become so considerable that it is a lucrative trade to open shops for them where they can swallow in rich vessels all sorts of dirt, and breathe amidst surroundings which do not offend their sense of beauty nor their habits of comfort the odour of decay and filth. A number of new professions are being formed—that of injectors of morphia and cocaine; of commissioners who, posted at the corners of the streets, offer their arms to persons attacked by agoraphobia, in order to enable them to cross the roads and squares; of companies of men who by vigorous affirmations are charged to tranquillize persons afflicted with the mania of doubt when taken by a fit of nervousness, etc.

The increase of nervous irritability, far beyond the present standard, has made it necessary to institute certain measures of protection. After it has frequently come to pass that over-excited persons, being unable to resist a sudden impulsion, have killed from their windows with air-guns, or have even openly attacked, the street boys who have uttered shrill whistles or piercingly sharp screams without rhyme or reason; that they have forced their way into strange houses where beginners are practising the piano or singing, and there committed murder; that they have made attempts with dynamite against tramways where the conductor rings a bell (as in Berlin) or whistles—it has been forbidden by law to whistle and bawl in the street; special buildings, managed in such a way that no sound penetrates to the outside, have been established for the practice of the piano and singing exercises; public conveyances have no right to make a noise, and the severest penalty is at the same time attached to the possession of air-guns. The barking of dogs having driven many people in the neighbourhood to madness and suicide, these animals cannot be kept in a town until after they have been made mute by severing the 'recurrent' nerve. A new legislation on subjects connected with the press forbids journalists, under severe penalties, to give detailed accounts of violence or suicides under peculiar circumstances. Editors are responsible for all punishable actions committed in imitation of their reports.

Sexual psychopathy of every nature has become so general and so imperious that manners and laws have adapted themselves accordingly. They appear already in the fashions. Masochists or passivists, who form the majority of men, clothe themselves in a costume which recalls, by colour and cut,

feminine apparel. Women who wish to please men of this kind wear men's dress, an eyeglass, boots with spurs and riding-whip, and only show themselves in the street with a large cigar in their mouths. The demand of persons with the 'contrary' sexual sentiment that persons of the same sex can conclude a legal marriage has obtained satisfaction, seeing they have been numerous enough to elect a majority of deputies having the same tendency.* Sadists, 'bestials,' nosophiles, and necrophiles, etc., find legal opportunities to gratify their inclinations. Modesty and restraint are dead superstitions of the past, and appear only as atavism and among the inhabitants of remote villages. The lust of murder is confronted as a disease, and treated by surgical intervention, etc.

The capacity for attention and contemplation has diminished so greatly that instruction at school is at most but two hours a day, and no public amusements, such as theatres, concerts, lectures, etc., last more than half an hour. For that matter, in the curriculum of studies, mental education is almost wholly suppressed, and by far the greater part of the time is reserved for bodily exercises; on the stage only representations of unveiled eroticism and bloody homicides, and to this, flock voluntary victims from all the parts, who aspire to the voluptuousness of dying amid the plaudits of delirious spectators.

The old religions have not many adherents. On the other hand, there are a great number of spiritualist communities who, instead of priests, maintain soothsayers, evokers of the dead, sorcerers, astrologers, and chiromancers, etc.

Books such as those of the present day have not been in fashion for a very long time. Printing is now only on black, blue, or golden paper; on another colour are single incoherent words, often nothing but syllables, nay, even letters or numbers only, but which have a symbolical significance which is meant to be guessed by the colour and print of the paper and form of the book, the size and nature of the characters. Authors soliciting popularity make comprehension easy by adding to the text symbolical arabesques, and impregnating the paper with a definite perfume. But this is considered vulgar by the refined and connoisseurs, and is but little esteemed. Some poets who publish no more than isolated letters of the alphabet, or whose works are coloured pages on which is absolutely nothing, elicit the greatest admiration. There are societies whose object it is to interpret them, and their enthusiasm is so fanatical that they frequently have fights against each other ending in murder.

* Dr. R. von Krafft-Ebing, *Neue Forshungen*, etc., 2 Auflage, pp. 109, 118. By the same, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 3 Auflage, p. 65.

It would be easy to augment this picture still further, no feature of which [illegible]nted, every detail being borrowed from special literature on criminal law and psychiatria, and observations of the peculiarities of neurasthenics, hysterics, and mattoids. This will be, in the near future, the condition of civilized humanity, if fatigue, nervous exhaustion, and the diseases and degeneration conditioned by them, make much greater progress.

Will it come to this? Well, no; I think not. And this, for a reason which scarcely perhaps permits of an objection: because humanity has not yet reached the term of its evolution; because the over-exertion of two or three generations cannot yet have exhausted all its vital powers. Humanity is not senile. It is still young, and a moment of over-exertion is not fatal for youth; it can recover itself. Humanity resembles a vast torrent of lava, which rushes, broad and deep, from the crater of a volcano in constant activity. The outer crust cracks into cold, vitrified scoriæ, but under this dead shell the mass flows, rapidly and evenly, in living incandescence.

As long as the vital powers of an individual, as of a race, are not wholly consumed, the organism makes efforts actively or passively to adapt itself, by seeking to modify injurious conditions, or by adjusting itself in some way so that conditions impossible to modify should be as little noxious as possible. Degenerates, hysterics, and neurasthenics are not capable of adaptation. Therefore they are fated to disappear. That which inexorably destroys them is that they do not know how to come to terms with reality. They are lost, whether they are alone in the world, or whether there are people with them who are still sane, or more sane than they, or at least curable.

They are lost if they are alone: for anti-social, inattentive, without judgment or prevision, they are capable of no useful individual effort, and still less of a common labour which demands obedience, discipline, and the regular performance of duty. They fritter away their life in solitary, unprofitable, æsthetic debauch, and all that their organs, which are in full regression, are still good for is enervating enjoyment. Like bats in old towers, they are niched in the proud monument of civilization, which they have found ready-made, but they themselves can construct nothing more, nor prevent any deterioration. They live, like parasites, on labour which past generations have accumulated for them; and when the heritage is once consumed, they are condemned to die of hunger.

But they are still more surely and rapidly lost if, instead of being alone in the world, healthy beings yet live at their side. For in that case they have to fight in the struggle for existence, and there is no leisure for them to perish in a slow decay by

their own incapacity for work. The normal man, with his clear mind, logical thought, sound judgment, and strong will, sees, where the degenerate only gropes; he plans and acts where the latter dozes and dreams; he drives him without effort from all the places where the life-springs of Nature bubble up, and, in possession of all the good things of this earth, he leaves to the impotent degenerate at most the shelter of the hospital, lunatic asylum, and prison, in contemptuous pity. Let us imagine the drivelling Zoroaster of Nietzsche, with his cardboard lions, eagles, and serpents, from a toyshop, or the noctambulist Des Esseintes of the Decadents, sniffing and licking his lips, or Ibsen's "solitary powerful" Stockmann, and his Rosmer lusting for suicide—let us imagine these beings in competition with men who rise early, and are not weary before sunset, who have clear heads, solid stomachs and hard muscles: the comparison will provoke our laughter.

Degenerates must succumb, therefore. They can neither adapt themselves to the conditions of Nature and civilization, nor maintain themselves in the struggle for existence against the healthy. But the latter—and the vast masses of the people still include unnumbered millions of them—will rapidly and easily adapt themselves to the conditions which new inventions have created in humanity. Those who, by marked deficiency of organization, are unable to do so, among the generation taken unawares by these inventions, fall out of the ranks; they become hysterical and neurasthenical, engender degenerates, and in these end their race;* but the more vigorous, although they at first also have become bewildered and fatigued, recover themselves little by little, their descendants accustom themselves to the rapid progress which humanity must make, and soon their slow respiration and their quieter pulsations of the heart will prove that it no longer costs them any effort to keep pace and keep up with the others. The end of the twentieth century, therefore, will probably see a generation to whom it will not be injurious to read a dozen square yards of newspapers daily, to be constantly called to the telephone, to be thinking simultaneously of the five continents of the world, to live half their time in a railway carriage or in a flying machine, and to satisfy the demands of a circle of ten thousand acquaintances, associates, and friends. It will know how to find its ease in the midst of a city inhabited by millions, and will be able, with nerves of gigantic vigour, to respond without haste or agitation to the almost innumerable claims of existence.

If, however, the new civilization should decidedly outstrip

* Dr. A. B. Morel, *Traité des Dégénérescences*, p. 581, note: 'The state of arrested development and *sterility* are the essential characteristics of beings arrived at the extreme limit of degeneracy.'

the powers of humanity, if even the most robust of the species should not in the long-run grow up to it, then ulterior generations will settle with it in another way. They will simply give it up. For humanity has a sure means of defence against innovations which impose a destructive effort on its nervous system, namely, 'misoneism,' that instinctive, invincible aversion to progress and its difficulties that Lombroso has studied so much, and to which he has given this name.* Misoneism protects man from changes of which the suddenness or the extent would be baneful to him. But it does not only appear as resistance to the acceptation of the new; it has another aspect, to wit, the abandonment and gradual elimination of inventions imposing claims too hard on man. We see savage races who die out when the power of the white man makes it impossible for them to shut out civilization; but we see also some who hasten with joy to tear off and throw away the stiff collar imposed by civilization, as soon as constraint is removed. I need only recall the anecdote, related in detail by Darwin, of the Fuegian Jemmy Button, who, taken as a child to England and brought up in that country, returned to his own land in the patent-leather shoes and gloves and what not of fashionable attire, but who, when scarcely landed, threw off the spell of all this foreign lumber for which he was not ripe, and became again a savage among savages.† During the period of the great migrations, the barbarians constructed block-houses in the shadow of the marble palaces of the Romans they had conquered, and preserved of Roman institutions, inventions, arts and sciences, only those which were easy and pleasant to bear. Humanity has, to-day as much as ever, the tendency to reject all that it cannot digest. If future generations come to find that the march of progress is too rapid for them, they will after a time composedly give it up. They will saunter along at their own pace or stop as they choose. They will suppress the distribution of letters, allow railways to disappear, banish telephones from dwelling-houses, preserving them only, perhaps, for the service of the State, will prefer weekly papers to daily journals, will quit cities to return to the country, will slacken the changes of fashion, will simplify the occupations of the day and year, and will grant the nerves some rest again. Thus, adaptation will be effected in any case, either by the increase of nervous power or by the renunciation of acquisitions which exact too much from the nervous system.

As to the future of art and literature, with which these

* C. Lombroso and R. Laschi, *Le Crime politique*, etc., t. i., p. 8 *et seq.*

† Charles Darwin, *A Naturalist's Voyage round the World, Journal of Researches*, etc., chap. x.

inquiries are chiefly concerned, that can be predicted with tolerable clearness. I resist the temptation of looking into too remote a future. Otherwise I should perhaps prove, or at least show as very probable, that in the mental life of centuries far ahead of us art and poetry will occupy but a very insignificant place. Psychology teaches us that the course of development is from instinct to knowledge, from emotion to judgment, from rambling to regulated association of ideas. Attention replaces fugitive ideation; will, guided by reason, replaces caprice. Observation, then, triumphs ever more and more over imagination and artistic symbolism—*i.e.*, the introduction of erroneous personal interpretations of the universe is more and more driven back by an understanding of the laws of Nature. On the other hand, the march followed hitherto by civilization gives us an idea of the fate which may be reserved for art and poetry in a very distant future. That which originally was the most important occupation of men of full mental development, of the maturest, best, and wisest members of society, becomes little by little a subordinate pastime, and finally a child's amusement. Dancing was formerly an extremely important affair. It was performed on certain grand occasions, as a State function of the first order, with solemn ceremonies, after sacrifices and invocations to the gods, by the leading warriors of the tribe. To-day it is no more than a fleeting pastime for women and youths, and later on its last atavistic survival will be the dancing of children. The fable and the fairy-tale were once the highest productions of the human mind. In them the most hidden wisdom of the tribe and its most precious traditions were expressed. To-day they represent a species of literature only cultivated for the nursery. The verse which by rhythm, figurative expression, and rhyme trebly betrays its origin in the stimulations of rhythmically functioning subordinate organs, in association of ideas working according to external similitudes, and in that working according to consonance, was originally the only form of literature. To-day it is only employed for purely emotional portrayal; for all other purposes it has been conquered by prose, and, indeed, has almost passed into the condition of an atavistic language. Under our very eyes the novel is being increasingly degraded, serious and highly cultivated men scarcely deeming it worthy of attention, and it appeals more and more exclusively to the young and to women. From all these examples, it is fair to conclude that after some centuries art and poetry will have become pure atavisms, and will no longer be cultivated except by the most emotional portion of humanity—by women, by the young, perhaps even by children.

But, as I have said, I merely venture on these passing hints

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INTRODUCTION

BY CESARE LOMBROSO

Criminal Man. (1876, 1911)

[Professor Lombroso was able before his death to give his personal attention to the volume prepared by his daughter and collaborator, Gina Lombroso Ferrero (wife of the distinguished historian), in which is presented a summary of the conclusions reached in the great treatise by Lombroso on the causes of criminality and the treatment of criminals. The preparation of the introduction to this volume was the last literary work which the distinguished author found it possible to complete during his final illness.]

IT will, perhaps, be of interest to American readers of this book, in which the ideas of the Modern Penal School, set forth in my work, *Criminal Man*, have been so pithily summed up by my daughter, to learn how the first outlines of this science arose in my mind and gradually took shape in a definite work—how, that is, combated by some, the object of almost fanatical adherence on the part of others, especially in America, where tradition has little hold, the Modern Penal School came into being.

On consulting my memory and the documents relating to my studies on this subject, I find that its two fundamental ideas—that, for instance, which

claims as an essential point the study not of crime in the abstract, but of the criminal himself, in order adequately to deal with the evil effects of his wrong-doing, and that which classifies the congenital criminal as an anomaly, partly pathological and partly atavistic, a revival of the primitive savage—did not suggest themselves to me instantaneously under the spell of a single deep impression, but were the offspring of a series of impressions. The slow and almost unconscious association of these first vague ideas resulted in a new system which, influenced by its origin, has preserved in all its subsequent developments the traces of doubt and indecision, the marks of the travail which attended its birth.

The first idea came to me in 1864, when, as an army doctor, I beguiled my ample leisure with a series of studies on the Italian soldier. From the very beginning I was struck by a characteristic that distinguished the honest soldier from his vicious comrade: the extent to which the latter was tattooed and the indecency of the designs that covered his body. This idea, however, bore no fruit.

The second inspiration came to me when on one occasion, amid the laughter of my colleagues, I sought to base the study of psychiatry on experimental methods. When in '66, fresh from the atmosphere of clinical experiment, I had begun to study psychi-

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atry, I realised how inadequate were the methods hitherto held in esteem, and how necessary it was, in studying the insane, to make the patient, not the disease, the object of attention. In homage to these ideas, I applied to the clinical examination of cases of mental alienation the study of the skull, with measurements and weights, by means of the esthesiometer and craniometer. Reassured by the result of these first steps, I sought to apply this method to the study of criminals—that is, to the differentiation of criminals and lunatics, following the example of a few investigators, such as Thomson and Wilson; but as at that time I had neither criminals nor moral imbeciles available for observation (a remarkable circumstance since I was to make the criminal my starting-point), and as I was skeptical as to the existence of those "moral lunatics" so much insisted on by both French and English authors, whose demonstrations, however, showed a lamentable lack of precision, I was anxious to apply the experimental method to the study of the diversity, rather than the analogy, between lunatics, criminals, and normal individuals. Like him, however, whose lantern lights the road for others, while he himself stumbles in the darkness, this method proved useless for determining the differences between criminals and lunatics, but served instead to

indicate a new method for the study of penal jurisprudence, a matter to which I had never given serious thought. I began dimly to realise that the *a priori* studies on crime in the abstract, hitherto pursued by jurists, especially in Italy, with singular acumen, should be superseded by the direct analytical study of the criminal, compared with normal individuals and the insane.

I, therefore, began to study criminals in the Italian prisons, and, amongst others, I made the acquaintance of the famous brigand Vilella. This man possesssed such extraordinary agility, that he had been known to scale steep mountain heights bearing a sheep on his shoulders. His cynical effrontery was such that he openly boasted of his crimes. On his death one cold grey November morning, I was deputed to make the *post-mortem*, and on laying open the skull I found on the occipital part, exactly on the spot where a spine is found in the normal skull, a distinct depression which I named *median occipital fossa*, because of its situation precisely in the middle of the occiput as in inferior animals, especially rodents. This depression, as in the case of animals, was correlated with the hypertrophy of the *vermis*, known in birds as the middle cerebellum.

This was not merely an idea, but a revelation. At the sight of that skull, I seemed to see all of a

sudden, lighted up as a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal—an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheek-bones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms, extreme size of the orbits, handle-shaped or sessile ears found in criminals, savages, and apes, insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight, tattooing, excessive idleness, love of orgies, and the irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood.

I was further encouraged in this bold hypothesis by the results of my studies on Verzeni, a criminal convicted of sadism and rape, who showed the cannibalistic instincts of primitive anthropophagists and the ferocity of beasts of prey.

The various parts of the extremely complex problem of criminality were, however, not all solved hereby. The final key was given by another case, that of Misdea, a young soldier of about twenty-one, unintelligent but not vicious. Although subject to epileptic fits, he had served for some years in the army when suddenly, for some trivial cause, he attacked and killed eight of his superior officers and

CHAPTER I

THE BORN CRIMINAL

A CRIMINAL is a man who violates the laws decreed by the State to regulate the relations between its citizens, but the voluminous codes which in past times set forth these laws treat only of crime, never of the criminal. That ignoble multitude whom Dante relegated to the Infernal Regions were consigned by magistrates and judges to the care of gaolers and executioners, who alone deigned to deal with them. The judge, immovable in his doctrine, unshaken by doubts, solemn in all his inviolability and convinced of his wisdom, which no one dared to question, passed sentence without remission according to his whim, and both judge and culprit were equally ignorant of the ultimate effect of the penalties inflicted.

In 1764, the great Italian jurist and economist, Cesare Beccaria first called public attention to those wretched beings, whose confessions (if state-

ments extorted by torture can thus be called) formed the sole foundation for the trial, the sole guide in the application of the punishment, which was bestowed blindly, without formality, without hearing the defence, exactly as though sentence were being passed on abstract symbols, not on human souls and bodies.

The Classical School of Penal Jurisprudence, of which Beccaria was the founder and Francesco Carrara the greatest and most glorious disciple, aimed only at establishing sound judgments and fixed laws to guide capricious and often undiscerning judges in the application of penalties. In writing his great work, the founder of this School was inspired by the highest of all human sentiments —pity; but although the criminal incidentally receives notice, the writings of this School treat only of the application of the law, not of offenders themselves.

This is the difference between the Classical and the Modern School of Penal Jurisprudence. The Classical School based its doctrines on the assumption that all criminals, except in a few extreme cases, are endowed with intelligence and feelings like normal individuals, and that they commit misdeeds consciously, being prompted thereto by their unrestrained desire for evil. The offence alone was considered, and on it the whole existing penal system has been founded, the severity of the sentence meted out to the offender being regulated by the gravity of his misdeed.

The Modern, or Positive, School of Penal Jurisprudence, on the contrary, maintains that the anti-social tendencies of criminals are the result of their physical and psychic organisation, which differs essentially from that of normal individuals; and it aims at studying the morphology and various functional phenomena of the criminal with the object of curing, instead of punishing him. The Modern School is therefore founded on a new science, Criminal Anthropology, which may be defined as the Natural History of the Criminal, because it embraces his organic and psychic constitution and social life, just as anthropology does in the case of normal human beings and the different races.

If we examine a number of criminals, we shall find that they exhibit numerous anomalies in the face, skeleton, and various psychic and sensitive functions, so that they strongly resemble primitive races. It was these anomalies that first drew my father's attention to the close relationship between the criminal and the savage and made him suspect that criminal tendencies are of atavistic origin.

When a young doctor at the Asylum in Pavia, he

was requested to make a post-mortem examination on a criminal named Vilella, an Italian Jack the Ripper, who by atrocious crimes had spread terror in the Province of Lombardy. Scarcely had he laid open the skull, when he perceived at the base, on the spot where the internal occipital crest or ridge is found in normal individuals, a small hollow, which he called *median occipital fossa* (see Fig. 1). This abnormal character was correlated to a still greater anomaly in the cerebellum, the hypertrophy of the vermis, *i.e.*, the spinal cord which separates the cerebellar lobes lying underneath the cerebral hemispheres. This vermis was so enlarged in the case of Vilella, that it almost formed a small, intermediate cerebellum like that found in the lower types of apes, rodents, and birds. This anomaly is very rare among inferior races, with the exception of the South American Indian tribe of the Aymaras of Bolivia and Peru, in whom it is not infrequently found (40%). It is seldom met with in the insane or other degenerates, but later investigations have shown it to be prevalent in criminals.

This discovery was like a flash of light. "At the sight of that skull," says my father, "I seemed to see all at once, standing out clearly illumined as in a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal, who reproduces in civilised

FIG. 1

FOSSETTE OCCIPITAL
(see page 6)

times characteristics, not only of primitive savages, but of still lower types as far back as the carnivora."

Thus was explained the origin of the enormous jaws, strong canines, prominent zygomæ, and strongly developed orbital arches which he had so frequently remarked in criminals, for these peculiarities are common to carnivores and savages, who tear and devour raw flesh. Thus also it was easy to understand why the span of the arms in criminals so often exceeds the height, for this is a characteristic of apes, whose fore-limbs are used in walking and climbing. The other anomalies exhibited by criminals—the scanty beard as opposed to the general hairiness of the body, prehensile foot, diminished number of lines in the palm of the hand, cheek-pouches, enormous development of the middle incisors and frequent absence of the lateral ones, flattened nose and angular or sugar-loaf form of the skull, common to criminals and apes; the excessive size of the orbits, which, combined with the hooked nose, so often imparts to criminals the aspect of birds of prey, the projection of the lower part of the face and jaws (prognathism) found in negroes and animals, and supernumerary teeth (amounting in some cases to a double row as in snakes) and cranial bones (epactal bone as in the Peruvian Indians): all these characteristics pointed to one conclusion, the

cephaly 10.9%, see Fig. 3), or terminating in a peak on the bregma or anterior fontanel (acrocephaly, see Fig. 4), or depressed in the middle (cymbocephaly, sphenocephaly). At times, there are crests or grooves along the sutures (11.9%) or the cranial bones are abnormally thick, a characteristic of savage peoples (36.6%) or abnormally thin (8.10%). Other anomalies of importance are the presence of Wormian bones in the sutures of the skull (21.22%), the bone of the Incas already alluded to (4%), and above all, the median occipital fossa. Of great importance also are the prominent frontal sinuses found in 25% (double that of normal individuals), the semicircular line of the temples, which is sometimes so exaggerated that it forms a ridge and is correlated to an excessive development of the temporal muscles, a common characteristic of primates and carnivores. Sometimes the forehead is receding, as in apes (19%), or low and narrow (10%).

The Face. In striking contrast to the narrow forehead and low vault of the skull, the face of the criminal, like those of most animals, is of disproportionate size, a phenomenon intimately connected with the greater development of the senses as compared with that of the nervous centres. Prognathism, the projection of the lower portion of the face beyond the forehead, is found in 45.7% of criminals.

Progeneismus, the projection of the lower teeth and jaw beyond the upper, is found in 38%, whereas among normal persons the proportion is barely 28%. As a natural consequence of this predominance of the lower portion of the face, the orbital arches and zygomæ show a corresponding development (35%) and the size of the jaws is naturally increased, the mean diameter being 103.9 mm. (4.09 inches) as against 93 mm. (3.66 inches) in normal persons. Among criminals 29% have voluminous jaws.

The excessive dimensions of the jaws and cheekbones admit of other explanations besides the atavistic one of a greater development of the masticatory system. They may have been influenced by the habit of certain gestures, the setting of the teeth or tension of the muscles of the mouth, which accompany violent muscular efforts and are natural to men who form energetic or violent resolves and meditate plans of revenge.

Asymmetry is a common characteristic of the criminal physiognomy. The eyes and ears are frequently situated at different levels and are of unequal size, the nose slants towards one side, etc. This asymmetry, as we shall see later, is connected with marked irregularities in the senses and functions.

The Eye. This window, through which the mind

opens to the outer world, is naturally the centre of many anomalies of a psychic character, hard expression, shifty glance, which are difficult to describe but are, nevertheless, apparent to all observers (see Fig. 4). Side by side with peculiarities of expression, we find many physical anomalies—ptosis, a drooping of the upper eyelid, which gives the eye a half-closed appearance and is frequently unilateral; and strabismus, a want of parallelism between the visual axes, which is insignificant if it arises from errors of refraction, but is very serious if it betokens progressive or congenital diseases of the brain or its membranous coverings. Other anomalies are asymmetry of the iris, which frequently differs in colour from its fellow; oblique eyelids, a Mongolian characteristic, with the edge of the upper eyelid folding inward or a prolongation of the internal fold of the eyelid, which Metchnikoff regards as a persistence of embryonic characters.

The Ear. The external ear is often of large size; occasionally also it is smaller than the ears of normal individuals. Twenty-eight per cent. of criminals have handle-shaped ears standing out from the face as in the chimpanzee: in other cases they are placed at different levels. Frequently too, we find misshapen, flattened ears, devoid of helix, tragus, and anti-tragus, and with a protuberance on the upper

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

part of the posterior margin (Darwin's tubercle), a relic of the pointed ear characteristic of apes. Anomalies are also found in the lobe, which in some cases adheres too closely to the face, or is of huge size as in the ancient Egyptians; in other cases, the lobe is entirely absent, or is atrophied till the ear assumes a form like that common to apes.

The Nose. This is frequently twisted, up-turned or of a flattened, negroid character in thieves; in murderers, on the contrary, it is often aquiline like the beak of a bird of prey. Not infrequently we meet with the trilobate nose, its tip rising like an isolated peak from the swollen nostrils, a form found among the Akkas, a tribe of pygmies of Central Africa. All these peculiarities have given rise to popular saws, of a character more or less prevalent everywhere.

The Mouth. This part shows perhaps a greater number of anomalies than any other facial organ. We have already alluded to the excessive development of the jaws in criminals. They are sometimes the seat of other abnormal characters,—the lemurine apophysis, a bony elevation at the angle of the jaw, which may easily be recognised externally by passing the hand over the skin; and the canine fossa, a depression in the upper jaw for the attachment of the canine muscle. This muscle, which is strongly

developed in the dog, serves when contracted to draw back the lip leaving the canines exposed.

The lips of violators of women and murderers are fleshy, swollen and protruding, as in negroes. Swindlers have thin, straight lips. Harelip is more common in criminals than in normal persons.

The Cheek-pouches. Folds in the flesh of the cheek which recall the pouches of certain species of mammals, are not uncommon in criminals.

The Palate. A central ridge (*torus palatinus*), more easily felt than seen, may sometimes be found on the palate, or this part may exhibit other peculiarities, a series of cavities and protuberances corresponding to the palatal teeth of reptiles. Another frequent abnormality is cleft palate, a fissure in the palate, due to defective development.

The Teeth. These are specially important, for criminals rarely have normal dentition. The incisors show the greatest number of anomalies. Sometimes both the lateral incisors are absent and the middle ones are of excessive size, a peculiarity which recalls the incisors of rodents. The teeth are frequently striated transversely or set very wide apart (diastema) with gaps on either side of the upper canines into which the lower ones fit, a simian characteristic. In some cases, these spaces

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FIG. 5. HEAD OF CRIMINAL (see page 18)

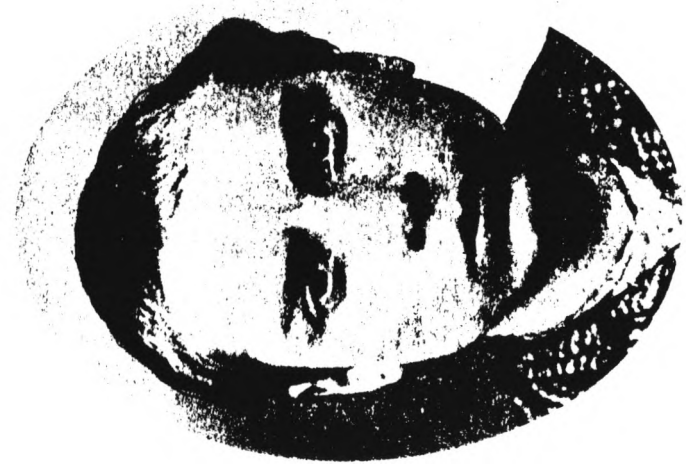

FIG. 4. HEAD OF CRIMINAL (see page 14)

occur between the middle incisors or between these and the lateral ones.

Very often the teeth show a strange uniformity, which recalls the homodontism of the lower vertebrates. In some cases, however, this uniformity is limited to the premolars, which are furnished with tubercles like the molars, a peculiarity of gorillas and orang-outangs. In 4% the canines are very strongly developed, long, sharp, and curving inwardly as in carnivores. Premature caries is common.

The Chin. Generally speaking, this part of the face projects moderately in Europeans. In criminals it is often small and receding, as in children, or else excessively long, short or flat, as in apes.

Wrinkles. Although common to normal individuals, the abundance, variety, and precocity of wrinkles almost invariably manifested by criminals, cannot fail to strike the observer. The following are the most common: horizontal and vertical lines on the forehead, horizontal and circumflex lines at the root of the nose, the so-called crow's-feet on the temple at the outer corners of the eyes, naso-labial wrinkles around the region of the mouth and nose.

The Hair. The hair of the scalp, cheeks and chin, eyebrows, and other parts of the body, shows a number of anomalies. In general it may be said

that in the distribution of hair, criminals of both sexes tend to exhibit characteristics of the opposite sex. Dark hair prevails especially in murderers, and curly and woolly hair in swindlers. Both grey hair and baldness are rare and when found make their appearance later in life than in the case of normal individuals. The beard is scanty and frequently missing altogether. On the other hand, the forehead is often covered with down. The eyebrows are bushy and tend to meet across the nose. Sometimes they grow in a slanting direction and give the face a satyr-like expression (see Fig. 5).

The blemishes peculiar to the delinquent are not only confined to the face and head, but are found in the trunk and limbs.

The Thorax. An increase or decrease in the number of ribs is found in 12% of criminals. This is an atavistic character common to animals and lower or prehistoric human races and contrasts with the numerical uniformity characteristic of civilised mankind.

Polymastia, or the presence of supernumerary nipples (which are generally placed symmetrically below the normal ones as in many mammals) is not an uncommon anomaly. Gynecomastia or hypertrophy of the mammæ is still more frequent in male criminals. In female criminals, on the contrary,

we often find imperfect development or absence of the nipples, a characteristic of monotremata or lowest order of the mammals; or the breasts are flabby and pendent like those of Hottentot women.

The chest is often covered with hair which gives the subject the appearance of an animal.

The Pelvis and Abdomen. The abdomen, pelvis, and reproductive organs sometimes show an inversion of sex-characters. In 42% the sacral canal is uncovered, and in some cases there is a prolongation of the coccyx, which resembles the stump of a tail, sometimes tufted with hair.

The Upper Limbs. One of the most striking and frequent anomalies exhibited by criminals is the excessive length of the arms as compared with the lower limbs, owing to which the span of the arms exceeds the total height, an ape-like character.

Six per cent. exhibit an anomaly which is extremely rare among normal individuals—the olecranon foramen, a perforation in the head of the humerus where it articulates with the ulna. This is normal in the ape and dog and is frequently found in the bones of prehistoric man and in some of the existing inferior races of mankind.

Several abnormal characters, which point to an atavistic origin, are found in the palm and fingers. Supernumerary fingers (polydactylism) or a reduc-

women's criminality – that certain great barriers, partly artificial, partly natural, have everywhere served to protect women from crime. It is not possible absolutely to prove this conclusion, because women cannot be put strictly under the same conditions as men; a woman who lived under the same conditions as men, it need scarcely be said, would no longer be a woman.

from Blanchard, Lucy & Ladas Joan, eds. Sexology uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science. Chicago, 1998.

The Female Offender (1893)

Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero

2. *Social and atavistic reasons for the rarity of the type.* – The remarkable rarity of anomalies (already revealed by their crania) is not a new phenomenon in the female, nor is it in contradiction to the undoubted fact that atavistically she is nearer to her origin than the male, and ought consequently to abound more in anomalies. [. . .]

Compilers of public statutes have also noted the conservative tendency of women in all questions of social order; a conservatism of which the primary cause is to be sought in the immobility of the ovule compared with the zoosperm.

To this add that the female, on whom falls the larger share of the duty of bringing up the family, necessarily leads a more sedentary life, and is less exposed than the male to the varying conditions of time and space in her environment. More especially is this the case among the greater number of vertebrates, and still more of savages, where the struggle for life, both for parents and progeny, devolves primarily upon the male, and is the incessant cause of variations and peculiar adaptations in functions and organs.

Now, once we admit that the primitive type of a species is more clearly represented in the female, we must proceed to argue thence that the typical forms of our race, being better organised and fixed in the woman through the action of time and long heredity, joined to fewer ancestral variations, are less subject to transformation and deformation by the influences which determine special and retrogressive variations in the male.

Another very potent factor has been sexual selection. Man not only refused to *marry* a deformed female, but ate her, while, on the other hand, preserving for his enjoyment the handsome woman who gratified his peculiar instincts. In those days he was the stronger, and choice rested with him. [. . .]

Yet another reason for the comparative rarity of the criminal type in

women is that congenitally they are less inclined to crime than men. Atavism must be held to account for this fact, savage females, and still more, civilised females, being by nature less ferocious than males. It is the *occasional* offender whom we meet with most frequently among women; and as occasional criminals have no special physiognomy, they can offer no examples of the type. And woman's inability in this respect is all the greater that even when a *born* offender she is, in the majority of cases, an adulteress, a calumniator, a swindler, or a mere accomplice – offences, every one of them, which require an attractive appearance, and prohibit the development of repulsive facial characteristics. [. . .]

[W]e may assert that if female born criminals are fewer in number than the males, they are often much more ferocious.

What is the explanation? We have seen that the normal woman is naturally less sensitive to pain than a man, and compassion is the offspring of sensitiveness. If the one be wanting, so will the other be.

We also saw that women have many traits in common with children; that their moral sense is deficient; that they are revengeful, jealous, inclined to vengeances of a refined cruelty.

In ordinary cases these defects are neutralised by piety, maternity, want of passion, sexual coldness, by weakness and an undeveloped intelligence. But when a morbid activity of the psychical centres intensifies the bad qualities of women, and induces them to seek relief in evil deeds; when piety and maternal sentiments are wanting, and in their place are strong passions and intensely erotic tendencies, much muscular strength and a superior intelligence for the conception and execution of evil, it is clear that the innocuous semi-criminal present in the normal woman must be transformed into a born criminal more terrible than any man.

What terrific criminals would children be if they had strong passions, muscular strength, and sufficient intelligence; and if, moreover, their evil tendencies were exasperated by a morbid psychical activity! And women are big children; their evil tendencies are more numerous and more varied than men's, but generally remain latent. When they are awakened and excited they produce results proportionately greater.

Moreover, the born female criminal is, so to speak, doubly exceptional, as a woman and as a criminal. For criminals are an exception among civilised people, and women are an exception among criminals, the natural form of retrogression in women being prostitution and not crime. The primitive woman was impure rather than criminal.

As a double exception, the criminal woman is consequently a monster. Her normal sister is kept in the paths of virtue by many causes, such as maternity, piety, weakness, and when these counter influences fail, and a woman commits a crime, we may conclude that her wickedness must have been enormous before it could triumph over so many obstacles.

pendulous, and the testicles were very much atrophied and no longer sensitive to pressure. The 'mujerado' had large *mammae* [breasts] like a pregnant woman, and asserted that he had nursed several children whose mothers had died. A second 'mujerado', aged thirty-six, after he had been ten years in the condition, presented the same peculiarities, though with less development of *mammae*. Like the first, the voice was high and thin. The body was plump.

The Female Offender (1893)
Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero

The primitive woman was rarely a murderess; but she was always a prostitute, and such she remained until semi-civilised epochs. Atavism, again, then explains why prostitutes should show a greater number of retrogressive characteristics than are to be observed in the female criminal.

Various as are these solutions of a singular problem, we may, I think, seek yet another. In female animals, in aboriginal women, and in the women of our time, the cerebral cortex, particularly in the psychical centres, is less active than in the male. The irritation consequent on a degenerative process is therefore neither so constant nor so lasting, and leads more easily to motor and hysterical epilepsy, or to sexual anomalies, than to crime. For a similar reason genius is more common in men than in women; and the lower animals remain insensible to narcotics, which intoxicate the human species, and are not subject to delirium or mania when attacked by fever.

We have now got to the reason why criminality increases among women with the march of civilisation. The female criminal is a kind of occasional delinquent, presenting few characteristics of degeneration, little dulness, &c., but tending to multiply in proportion to her opportunities for evil-doing; while the prostitute has a greater atavistic resemblance to her primitive ancestress, the woman of pleasure, and, as we shall see, has consequently a greater dulness of touch and taste, a greater propensity for tattooing, and so on.

In short, the female criminal is of less typical aspect than the male because she is less essentially criminal; because in all forms of degeneration she deviates to a less degree; because, being organically conservative, she keeps the characteristics of her type even in her aberrations from it; and finally because beauty, being for her a supreme necessity, her grace of form resists even the assaults of degeneracy.

But it cannot be denied that when depravity in woman is profound, then the law by which the type bears the brand of criminality asserts itself in spite of all restraint, at any rate as far as civilised races are concerned [. . .]; and this is particularly true of the prostitute, whose type approximates so much more to that of her primitive ancestress.

Atavism. – Atavism helps to explain the rarity of the criminal type in woman. The very precocity of prostitutes – the precocity which increases their apparent beauty – is primarily attributable to atavism. Due also to it is the virility underlying the female criminal type; for what we look for most in the female is femininity, and when we find the opposite in her we conclude as a rule that there must be some anomaly. And in order to understand the significance and the atavistic origin of this anomaly, we have only to remember that virility was one of the special features of the savage women. [. . .]

The criminal being only a reversion to the primitive type of his species, the female criminal necessarily offers the two most salient characteristics of primordial woman, namely, precocity and a minor degree of differentiation from the male – this lesser differentiation manifesting itself in the stature, cranium, brain, and in the muscular strength which she possesses to a degree so far in advance of the modern female. Examples of this masculine strength may still be found among women in country districts of Italy, and especially in the islands.

Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. II: *Sexual Inversion [1897] (3rd edn, 1915)
Havelock Ellis

Traces of homosexual practices, sometimes on a large scale, have been found among all the great divisions of the human race. It would be possible to collect a considerable body of evidence under this head. Unfortunately, however, the travellers and others on whose records we are dependent have been so shy of touching these subjects, and so ignorant of the main points for investigation, that it is very difficult to discover sexual inversion in the proper sense in any lower race. Travellers have spoken vaguely of crimes against nature without defining the precise relationship involved nor inquiring how far any congenital impulse could be distinguished.

Looking at the phenomena generally, so far as they have been recorded among various lower races, we seem bound to recognize that there is a widespread natural instinct impelling men toward homosexual relation-

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

The Speckled Band

In glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. Of all these varied cases, however, I cannot recall any which presented more singular features than that which was associated with the well-known Surrey family of the Roylotts of Stoke Moran. The events in question occurred in the early days of my association with Holmes, when we were sharing rooms as bachelors, in Baker Street. It is possible that I might have placed them upon record before, but a promise of secrecy was made at the time, from which I have only been freed during the last month by the untimely death of the lady to whom the pledge was given. It is perhaps as well that the facts should now come to light, for I have reasons to know there are widespread rumours as to the death of Dr Grimesby Roylott which tend to make the matter even more terrible than the truth.

It was early in April, in the year '83, that I woke one morning to find Sherlock Holmes standing, fully dressed, by the side of my bed. He was a late riser as a rule, and, as the clock on the mantelpiece showed me that it was only a quarter past seven, I blinked up at him in some surprise, and perhaps just a little resentment, for I was myself regular in my habits.

'Very sorry to knock you up, Watson,' said he, 'but it's the common lot this morning. Mrs Hudson has been knocked up, she retorted upon me, and I on you.'

'What is it, then? A fire?'

'No, a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement, who insists upon seeing me. She is waiting now in the sitting-room. Now, when young ladies wander about the metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy

DOYLE, ARTHUR CONAN. THE BEST OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. London: Everyman / J.M. Dent, 1992.

people up out of their beds, I presume that it is something very pressing which they have to communicate. Should it prove to be an interesting case, you would, I am sure, wish to follow it from the outset. I thought at any rate that I should call you, and give you the chance.'

'My dear fellow, I would not miss it for anything.'

I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deductions, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis, with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him. I rapidly threw on my clothes, and was ready in a few minutes to accompany my friend down to the sitting-room. A lady dressed in black and heavily veiled, who had been sitting in the window, rose as we entered.

'Good morning, madam,' said Holmes cheerily. 'My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. Ha, I am glad to see that Mrs Hudson has had the good sense to light the fire. Pray draw up to it, and I shall order you a cup of coffee, for I observe that you are shivering.'

'It is not cold which makes me shiver,' said the woman in a low voice, changing her seat as requested.

'What then?'

'It is fear, Mr Holmes. It is terror.' She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and grey, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features and figure were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature grey, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.

'You must not fear,' said he soothingly, bending forward and patting her forearm. 'We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. You have come in by train this morning, I see.'

'You know me, then?'

'No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, and yet you had a good drive in a dog-cart, along heavy roads, before you reached the station.'

The lady gave a violent start, and stared in bewilderment at my companion.

'There is no mystery, my dear madam,' said he, smiling. 'The left

arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in no less than seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the lefthand side of the driver.'

'Whatever your reasons may be, you are perfectly correct,' said she. 'I started from home before six, reached Leatherhead at twenty past, and came in by the first train to Waterloo. Sir, I can stand this strain no longer, I shall go mad if it continues. I have no one to turn to – none, save only one, who cares for me, and he, poor fellow, can be of little aid. I have heard of you, Mr Holmes; I have heard of you from Mrs Farintosh, whom you helped in the hour of her sore need. It was from her that I had your address. Oh, sir, do you not think you could help me too, and at least throw a little light through the dense darkness which surrounds me? At present it is out of my power to reward you for your services, but in a month or two I shall be married, with the control of my own income, and then at least you shall not find me ungrateful.'

Holmes turned to his desk, and unlocking it, drew out a small casebook which he consulted.

'Farintosh,' said he. 'Ah, yes, I recall the case; it was concerned with an opal tiara. I think it was before your time, Watson. I can only say, madam, that I shall be happy to devote the same care to your case as I did to that of your friend. As to reward, my profession is its reward; but you are at liberty to defray whatever expenses I may be put to, at the time which suits you best. And now I beg that you will lay before us everything that may help us in forming an opinion upon the matter.'

'Alas!' replied our visitor. 'The very horror of my situation lies in the fact that my fears are so vague, and my suspicions depend so entirely upon small points, which might seem trivial to another, that even he to whom of all others I have a right to look for help and advice looks upon all that I tell him about it as the fancies of a nervous woman. He does not say so, but I can read it from his soothing answers and averted eyes. But I have heard, Mr Holmes, that you can see deeply into the manifold wickedness of the human heart. You may advise me how to walk amid the dangers which encompass me.'

'I am all attention, madam.'

'My name is Helen Stoner, and I am living with my stepfather, who is the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in

England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran, on the Western border of Surrey.'

Holmes nodded his head. 'The name is familiar to me,' said he.

'The family was at one time among the richest in England, and the estate extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west. In the last century, however, four successive heirs were of dissolute and wasteful disposition, and the family ruin was eventually completed by a gambler, in the days of the Regency. Nothing was left save a few acres of ground and the 200-year-old house, which is itself crushed under a heavy mortgage. The last squire dragged out his existence there, living the horrible life of an aristocratic pauper; but his only son, my stepfather, seeing that he must adapt himself to the new conditions, obtained an advance from a relative, which enabled him to take a medical degree, and went out to Calcutta, where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he established a large practice. In a fit of anger, however, caused by some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house, he beat his native butler to death, and narrowly escaped a capital sentence. As it was, he suffered a long term of imprisonment, and afterwards returned to England a morose and disappointed man.

'When Dr Roylott was in India he married my mother, Mrs Stoner, the young widow of Major-General Stoner, of the Bengal Artillery. My sister Julia and I were twins, and we were only two years old at the time of my mother's remarriage. She had a considerable sum of money, not less than a thousand a year, and this she bequeathed to Dr Roylott entirely whilst we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage. Shortly after our return to England my mother died – she was killed eight years ago in a railway accident near Crewe. Dr Roylott then abandoned his attempts to establish himself in practice in London, and took us to live with him in the ancestral house at Stoke Moran. The money which my mother had left was enough for all our wants, and there seemed no obstacle to our happiness.

'But a terrible change came over our stepfather about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in his house, and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to

mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics. A series of disgraceful brawls took place, two of which ended in the police-court, until at last he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach, for he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger.

'Last week he hurled the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream and it was only by paying over all the money that I could gather together that I was able to avert another public exposure. He had no friends at all save the wandering gipsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate, and would accept in return the hospitality of their tents, wandering away with them sometimes for weeks on end. He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over the grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master.

'You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, and for a long time we did all the work of the house. She was but thirty at the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has.'

'Your sister is dead, then?'

'She died just two years ago, and it is of her death that I wish to speak to you. You can understand that, living the life which I have described, we were little likely to see anyone of our own age and position. We had, however, an aunt, my mother's maiden sister, Miss Honoria Westphail, who lives near Harrow, and we were occasionally allowed to pay short visits at this lady's house. Julia went there at Christmas two years ago, and met there a half-pay Major of Marines, to whom she became engaged. My stepfather learned of the engagement when my sister returned, and offered no objections to the marriage; but within a fortnight of the day which had been fixed for the wedding, the terrible event occurred which has deprived me of my only companion.'

Sherlock Holmes had been leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed, and his head sunk in a cushion, but he had opened his lids now, and glanced across at his visitor.

'Pray be precise as to details,' said he.

'It is easy for me to be so, for every event of that dreadful time is seared into my memory. The manor house is, as I have already said, very old, and only one wing is now inhabited. The bedrooms in this wing are on the ground floor, the sitting-rooms being in the central block of the buildings. Of these bedrooms the first is Dr Roylott's, the second is my sister's, and the third my own. There is no communication between them, but they all open out into the same corridor. Do I make myself plain?'

'Perfectly so.'

'The windows of the three rooms open out upon the lawn. That fatal night Dr Roylott had gone to his room early, though we knew that he had not retired to rest, for my sister was troubled by the smell of the strong Indian cigars which it was his custom to smoke. She left her room, therefore, and came into mine, where she sat for some time, chatting about her approaching wedding. At eleven o'clock she rose to leave me, but she paused at the door and looked back.

'"Tell me, Helen," said she, "have you ever heard anyone whistle in the dead of the night."

'"Never," said I.

'"I suppose that you could not possibly whistle yourself in your sleep?"

'"Certainly not. But why?"

'"Because during the last few nights I have always, about three in the morning, heard a low clear whistle. I am a light sleeper, and it has awakened me. I cannot tell where it came from – perhaps from the next room, perhaps from the lawn. I thought that I would just ask you whether you had heard it."

'"No, I have not. It must be those wretched gipsies in the plantation."

'"Very likely. And yet if it were on the lawn I wonder that you did not hear it also."

'"Well, it is of no great consequence, at any rate," she smiled back at me, closed my door, and a few moments later I heard her key turn in the lock.'

'Indeed,' said Holmes. 'Was it your custom always to lock yourselves in at night?'

'Always.'

'And why?'

'I think that I mentioned to you that the Doctor kept a cheetah and a baboon. We had no feeling of security unless our doors were locked.'

'Quite so. Pray proceed with your statement.'

'I could not sleep that night. A vague feeling of impending misfortune impressed me. My sister and I, you will recollect, were twins, and you know how subtle are the links which bind two souls which are so closely allied. It was a wild night. The wind was howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows. Suddenly, amidst all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman. I knew that it was my sister's voice. I sprang from my bed, wrapped a shawl round me, and rushed into the corridor. As I opened my door I seemed to hear a low whistle, such as my sister described, and a few moments later a clanging sound, as if a mass of metal had fallen. As I ran down the passage my sister's door was unlocked, and revolved slowly upon its hinges. I stared at it horror-stricken, not knowing what was about to issue from it. By the light of the corridor lamp I saw my sister appear at the opening, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help, her whole figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard. I ran to her and threw my arms around her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed. At first I thought that she had not recognized me, but as I bent over her she suddenly shrieked out in a voice which I shall never forget, "Oh, my God Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!" There was something else which she would fain have said, and she stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the Doctor's room, but a fresh convulsion seized her and choked her words. I rushed out, calling loudly for my stepfather, and I met him hastening from his room in his dressing-gown. When he reached my sister's side she was unconscious, and though he poured brandy down her throat, and sent for medical aid from the village, all efforts were in vain, for she slowly sank and died without having recovered her consciousness. Such was the dreadful end of my beloved sister.'

'One moment,' said Holmes; 'are you sure about this whistle and metallic sound? Could you swear to it?'

'That was what the county coroner asked me at the inquiry. It is my strong impression that I heard it, and yet among the crash of the gale, and the creaking of an old house, I may possibly have been deceived.'

'Was your sister dressed?'

'No, she was in her nightdress. In her right hand was found the charred stump of a match, and in her left a matchbox.'

'Showing that she had struck a light and looked about her when the alarm took place. That is important. And what conclusions did the coroner come to?'

'He investigated the case with great care, for Dr Roylott's conduct had long been notorious in the county, but he was unable to find any satisfactory cause of death. My evidence showed that the door had been fastened upon the inner side, and the windows were blocked by old-fashioned shutters with broad iron bars, which were secured every night. The walls were carefully sounded, and were shown to be quite solid all round, and the flooring was also thoroughly examined, with the same result. The chimney is wide, but is barred up by four large staples. It is certain, therefore, that my sister was quite alone when she met her end. Besides, there were no marks of any violence upon her.'

'How about poison?'

'The doctors examined her for it, but without success.'

'What do you think that this unfortunate lady died of, then?'

'It is my belief that she died of pure fear and nervous shock, though what it was which frightened her I cannot imagine.'

'Were there gipsies in the plantation at that time?'

'Yes, there are nearly always some there.'

'Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band – a speckled band?'

'Sometimes I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium, sometimes that it may have referred to some band of people, perhaps to these very gipsies in the plantation. I do not know whether the spotted handkerchief which so many of them wear over their heads might have suggested the strange adjective which she used.'

Holmes shook his head like a man who is far from being satisfied.

'These are very deep waters,' said he; 'pray go on with your narrative.'

'Two years have passed since then, and my life has been until lately lonelier than ever. A month ago, however, a dear friend, whom I have known for many years, has done me the honour to ask my hand in marriage. His name is Armitage – Percy Armitage – the second son of Mr Armitage, of Crane Water, near Reading. My stepfather has offered no opposition to the match, and we are to be

married in the course of the spring. Two days ago some repairs were started in the west wing of the building, and my bedroom wall has been pierced, so that I have had to move into the chamber in which my sister died, and to sleep in the very bed in which she slept. Imagine, then, my thrill of terror when last night, as I lay awake, thinking over her terrible fate, I suddenly heard in the silence of the night the low whistle which had been the herald of her own death. I sprang up and lit the lamp, but nothing was to be seen in the room. I was too shaken to go to bed again, however, so I dressed, and as soon as it was daylight slipped down, got a dog-cart at the Crown Inn, which is opposite, and drove to Leatherhead, from whence I have come on this morning, with the one object of seeing you and asking your advice.'

'You have done wisely,' said my friend. 'But have you told me all?'

'Yes, all.'

'Miss Stoner, you have not. You are screening your stepfather.'

'Why, what do you mean?'

For answer Holmes pushed back the frill of black lace which fringed the hand that lay upon our visitor's knee. Five little livid spots, the marks of four fingers and a thumb, were printed upon the white wrist.

'You have been cruelly used,' said Holmes.

The lady coloured deeply, and covered over her injured wrist. 'He is a hard man,' she said, 'and perhaps he hardly knows his own strength.'

There was a long silence, during which Holmes leaned his chin upon his hands and stared into the crackling fire.

'This is very deep business,' he said at last. 'There are a thousand details which I should desire to know before I decide upon our course of action. Yet we have not a moment to lose. If we were to come to Stoke Moran today, would it be possible for us to see over these rooms without the knowledge of your stepfather?'

'As it happens, he spoke of coming into town today upon some most important business. It is probable that he will be away all day, and that there would be nothing to disturb you. We have a housekeeper now, but she is old and foolish, and I could easily get her out of the way.'

'Excellent. You are not averse to this trip, Watson?'

'By no means.'

'Then we shall both come. What are you going to do yourself?'

'I have one or two things which I would wish to do now that I am in town. But I shall return by the twelve o'clock train, so as to be there in time for your coming.'

'And you may expect us early in the afternoon. I have myself some small business matters to attend to. Will you not wait and breakfast?'

'No, I must go. My heart is lightened already since I have confided my trouble to you. I shall look forward to seeing you again this afternoon.' She dropped her thick black veil over her face, and glided from the room.

'And what do you think of it all, Watson?' asked Sherlock Holmes, leaning back in his chair.

'It seems to me to be a most dark and sinister business.'

'Dark enough and sinister enough.'

'Yet if the lady is correct in saying that the flooring and walls are sound, and that the door, window, and chimney are impassable, then her sister must have been undoubtedly alone when she met her mysterious end.'

'What becomes, then, of these nocturnal whistles, and what of the very peculiar words of the dying woman?'

'I cannot think.'

'When you combine the ideas of whistles at night, the presence of a band of gipsies who are on intimate terms with this old doctor, the fact that we have every reason to believe that the doctor has an interest in preventing his stepdaughter's marriage, the dying allusion to a band, and finally, the fact that Miss Helen Stoner heard a metallic clang, which might have been caused by one of those metal bars which secured the shutters falling back into their place, I think there is good ground to think that the mystery may be cleared along those lines.'

'But what, then, did the gipsies do?'

'I cannot imagine.'

'I see many objections to any such a theory.'

'And so do I. It is precisely for that reason that we are going to Stoke Moran this day. I want to see whether the objections are fatal, or if they may be explained away. But what, in the name of the devil!'

The ejaculation had been drawn from my companion by the fact that our door had been suddenly dashed open, and that a huge man framed himself in the aperture. His costume was a peculiar mixture of the professional and the agricultural, having a black top-hat, long frock-coat, and a pair of high gaiters, with a hunting-crop swinging in his hand. So tall was he that his hat actually brushed the cross-bar of the doorway, and his breadth seemed to span it across from side to side. A large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion, was turned from one to the other of us, while his deep-set, bile-shot eyes, and the high thin fleshless nose, gave him somewhat the resemblance to a fierce old bird of prey.

'Which of you is Holmes?' asked this apparition.

'My name, sir, but you have the advantage of me,' said my companion quietly.

'I am Dr Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran.'

'Indeed, Doctor,' said Holmes blandly. 'Pray take a seat.'

'I will do nothing of the kind. My stepdaughter has been here. I have traced her. What has she been saying to you?'

'It is a little cold for the time of the year,' said Holmes.

'What has she been saying to you?' screamed the old man furiously.

'But I have heard that the crocuses promise well,' continued my companion imperturbably.

'Ha! You put me off, do you?' said our new visitor, taking a step forward, and shaking his hunting-crop. 'I know you, you scoundrel! I have heard of you before. You are Holmes the meddler.'

My friend smiled.

'Holmes the busybody.'

His smile broadened.

'Holmes the Scotland Yard jack-in-office.'

Holmes chuckled heartily. 'Your conversation is most entertaining,' said he. 'When you go out close the door, for there is a decided draught.'

'I will go when I have had my say. Don't you dare to meddle with my affairs. I know that Miss Stoner has been here – I traced her! I am a dangerous man to fall foul of! See here.' He stepped swiftly forward, seized the poker, and bent it into a curve with his huge brown hands.

'See that you keep yourself out of my grip,' he snarled, and hurling the twisted poker into the fireplace, he strode out of the room.

'He seems a very amiable person,' said Holmes, laughing, 'I am not quite so bulky, but if he had remained I might have shown him that my grip was not much more feeble than his own.' As he spoke

he picked up the steel poker, and with a sudden effort straightened it out again.

'Fancy his having the insolence to confound me with the official detective force! This incident gives zest to our investigation, however, and I only trust that our little friend will not suffer from her imprudence in allowing this brute to trace her. And now, Watson, we shall order breakfast, and afterwards I shall walk down to Doctors' Commons, where I hope to get some data which may help us in this matter.'

It was nearly one o'clock when Sherlock Holmes returned from his excursion. He held in his hand a sheet of blue paper, scrawled over with notes and figures.

'I have seen the will of the deceased wife,' said he. 'To determine its exact meaning I have been obliged to work out the present prices of the investments with which it is concerned. The total income, which at the time of the wife's death was little short of £1,100, is now through the fall in agricultural prices not more than £750. Each daughter can claim an income of £250, in case of marriage. It is evident therefore, that if both girls had married, this beauty would have had a mere pittance, while even one of them would cripple him to a serious extent. My morning's work has not been wasted, since it has proved that he has the very strongest motives for standing in the way of anything of the sort. And now, Watson, this is too serious for dawdling, especially as the old man is aware that we are interesting ourselves in his affairs, so if you are ready we shall call a cab and drive to Waterloo. I should be very much obliged if you would slip your revolver into your pocket. An Eley's No. 2 is an excellent argument with gentlemen who can twist steel pokers into knots. That and a toothbrush are, I think, all that we need.'

At Waterloo we were fortunate in catching a train for Leatherhead, where we hired a trap at the station inn, and drove for four or five miles through the lovely Surrey lanes. It was a perfect day, with a bright sun and a few fleecy clouds in the heavens. The trees and wayside hedges were just throwing out their first green shoots, and the air was full of the pleasant smell of the moist earth. To me at least there was a strange contrast between the sweet promise of the spring and this sinister quest upon which we were engaged. My companion sat in front of the trap, his arms folded, his hat pulled down over his eyes, and his chin sunk upon his breast, buried in the deepest thought. Suddenly, however, he started, tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed over the meadows.

'Look here!' said he.

A heavily timbered park stretched up in a gentle slope, thickening into a grove at the highest point. From amidst the branches there jutted out the grey gables and high roof-tree of a very old mansion.

'Stoke Moran?' said he.

'Yes, sir, that be the house of Dr Grimesby Roylott,' remarked the driver.

'There is some building going on there,' said Holmes: 'that is where we are going.'

'There's the village,' said the driver, pointing to a cluster of roofs some distance to the left; 'but if you want to get to the house, you'll find it shorter to go over this stile, and so by the footpath over the fields. There it is, where the lady is walking.'

'And the lady, I fancy, is Miss Stoner,' observed Holmes, shading his eyes. 'Yes, I think we had better do as you suggest.'

We got off, paid our fare, and the trap rattled back on its way to Leatherhead.

'I thought it as well,' said Holmes, as we climbed the stile, 'that this fellow should think we had come here as architects or on some definite business. It may stop his gossip. Good afternoon, Miss Stoner. You see that we have been as good as our word.'

Our client of the morning had hurried forward to meet us with a face which spoke her joy. 'I have been waiting eagerly for you,' she cried, shaking hands with us warmly. 'All has turned out splendidly. Dr Roylott has gone to town and it is unlikely that he will be back before evening.'

'We have had the pleasure of making the Doctor's acquaintance,' said Holmes, and in a few words he sketched out what had occurred. Miss Stoner turned white to the lips as she listened.

'Good heavens!' she cried, 'he has followed me, then.'

'So it appears.'

'He is so cunning that I never know when I am safe from him. What will he say when he returns?'

'He must guard himself, for he may find that there is someone more cunning than himself upon his track. You must lock yourself from him tonight. If he is violent, we shall take you away to your aunt's at Harrow. Now, we must make the best use of our time, so kindly take us at once to the rooms which we are to examine.'

The building was of grey, lichen-blotched stone, with a high

central portion, and two curving wings, like the claws of a crab, thrown out on each side. In one of these wings the windows were broken, and blocked with wooden boards, while the roof was partly caved in, a picture of ruin. The central portion was in little better repair, but the right-hand block was comparatively modern, and the blinds in the windows, with the blue smoke curling up from the chimneys showed that this was where the family resided. Some scaffolding had been erected against the end wall, and the stonework had been broken into, but there were no signs of any workmen at the moment of our visit. Holmes walked slowly up and down the ill-trimmed lawn, and examined with deep attention the outsides of the windows.

'This, I take it, belongs to the room in which you used to sleep, the centre one to your sister's, and the one next to the main building to Dr Roylott's chamber?'

'Exactly so. But I am now sleeping in the middle one.'

'Pending the alterations, as I understand. By the way, there does not seem to be any very pressing need for repairs at that end wall.'

'There were none. I believe that it was an excuse to move me from my room.'

'Ah! that is suggestive. Now, on the other side of this narrow wing runs the corridor from which these three rooms open. There are windows in it, of course?'

'Yes, but very small ones. Too narrow for anyone to pass through.'

'As you both locked your doors at night, your rooms were unapproachable from that side. Now, would you have the kindness to go into your room, and to bar your shutters.'

Miss Stoner did so, and Holmes, after a careful examination through the open window, endeavoured in every way to force the shutter open, but without success. There was no slit through which a knife could be passed to raise the bar. Then with his lens he tested the hinges, but they were of solid iron, built firmly into the massive masonry. 'Hum!' said he, scratching his chin in some perplexity, 'my theory certainly presents some difficulties. No one could pass these shutters if they were bolted. Well, we shall see if the inside throws any light upon the matter.'

A small side-door led into the whitewashed corridor from which the three bedrooms opened. Holmes refused to examine the third chamber, so we passed at once to the second, that in which Miss Stoner was now sleeping, and in which her sister had met her fate.

It was a homely little room, with a low ceiling and gaping fireplace, after the fashion of old country houses. A brown chest of drawers stood in one corner, a narrow white-counterpaned bed in another, and a dressing-table on the left-hand side of the window. These articles, with two small wickerwork chairs, made up all the furniture in the room, save for a square of Wilton carpet in the centre. The boards round and the panelling of the walls were brown worm-eaten oak, so old and discoloured that it may have dated from the original building of the house. Holmes drew one of the chairs into a corner and sat silent, while his eyes travelled round and round and up and down, taking in every detail of the apartment.

'Where does that bell communicate with?' he asked at last, pointing to a thick bell-rope which hung down beside the bed, the tassel actually lying upon the pillow.

'It goes to the housekeeper's room.'

'It looks newer than the other things?'

'Yes, it was only put there a couple of years ago.'

'Your sister asked for it, I suppose?'

'No, I never heard of her using it. We used always to get what we wanted for ourselves.'

'Indeed, it seemed unnecessary to put so nice a bell-pull there. You will excuse me for a few minutes while I satisfy myself as to this floor.' He threw himself down upon his face with his lens in his hand, and crawled swiftly backwards and forwards, examining minutely the cracks between the boards. Then he did the same with the woodwork with which the chamber was panelled. Finally he walked over to the bed and spent some time in staring at it, and in running his eye up and down the wall. Finally he took the bell-rope in his hand and gave it a brisk tug.

'Why, it's a dummy,' said he.

'Won't it ring?'

'No, it is not even attached to a wire. This is very interesting. You can see now that it is fastened to a hook just above where the little opening of the ventilator is.'

'How very absurd! I never noticed that before.'

'Very strange!' muttered Holmes, pulling at the rope. 'There are one or two very singular points about this room. For example, what a fool a builder must be to open a ventilator in another room, when with the same trouble, he might have communicated with the outside air!'

'That is also quite modern,' said the lady.

'Done about the same time as the bell-rope?' remarked Holmes.

'Yes, there were several little changes carried out about that time.'

'They seem to have been of a most interesting character – dummy bell-ropes, and ventilators which do not ventilate. With your permission, Miss Stoner, we shall now carry out researches into the inner apartment.'

Dr Grimesby Roylott's chamber was larger than that of his stepdaughter, but was as plainly furnished. A camp bed, a small wooden shelf full of books, mostly of technical character, an armchair beside the bed, a plain wooden chair against the wall, a round table, and a large iron safe were the principal things which met the eye. Holmes walked slowly round and examined each and all of them with the keenest interest.

'What's in here?' he asked, tapping the safe.

'My stepfather's business papers.'

'Oh! you have seen inside then?'

'Only once, some years ago. I remember that it was full of papers.'

'There isn't a cat in it, for example?'

'No. What a strange idea!'

'Well, look at this!' He took up a small saucer of milk which stood on the top of it.

'No; we don't keep a cat. But there is a cheetah and a baboon.'

'Ah, yes, of course! Well, a cheetah is just a big cat, and yet a saucer of milk does not go very far in satisfying its wants, I daresay. There is one point which I should wish to determine.' He squatted down in front of the wooden chair, and examined the seat of it with the greatest attention.

'Thank you. That is quite settled,' said he, rising and putting his lens in his pocket. 'Hullo! here is something interesting!'

The object which had caught his eye was a small dog lash hung on one corner of the bed. The lash, however, was curled upon itself, and tied so as to make a loop of whipcord.

'What do you make of that, Watson?'

'It's a common enough lash, But I don't know why it should be tied.'

'That is not quite so common, is it? Ah, me! it's a wicked world, and when a clever man turns his brain to crime it is the worst of all. I think that I have seen enough now, Miss Stoner, and, with your permission, we shall walk out upon the lawn.'

I had never seen my friend's face so grim, or his brow so dark, as it was when we turned from the scene of his investigation. We had walked several times up and down the lawn, neither Miss Stoner nor myself liking to break in upon his thoughts before he roused himself from his reverie.

'It is very essential, Miss Stoner,' said he, 'that you should absolutely follow my advice in every respect.'

'I shall most certainly do so.'

'The matter is too serious for any hesitation. Your life may depend upon your compliance.'

'I assure you that I am in your hands.'

'In the first place, both my friend and I must spend the night in your room.'

Both Miss Stoner and I gazed at him in astonishment.

'Yes, it must be so. Let me explain. I believe that that is the village inn over there?'

'Yes, that is the "Crown".'

'Very good. Your windows would be visible from there.'

'Certainly.'

'You must confine yourself to your room, on pretence of a headache, when your stepfather comes back. Then when you hear him retire for the night, you must open the shutters of your windows, undo the hasp, put your lamp there as a signal to us, and then withdraw with everything which you are likely to want into the room which you used to occupy. I have no doubt that, in spite of your repairs, you could manage there for one night.'

'Oh, yes, easily.'

'The rest you will leave in our hands.'

'But what will you do?'

'We shall spend the night in your room, and we shall investigate the cause of this noise which has disturbed you.'

'I believe, Mr Holmes, that you have already made up your mind,' said Miss Stoner, laying her hand upon my companion's sleeve.

'Perhaps I have.'

'Then for pity's sake tell me what was the cause of my sister's death.'

'I should prefer to have clearer proof before I speak.'

'You can at least tell me whether my own thought is correct, and if she died from some sudden fright.'

'No, I do not think so. I think that there was probably some

more tangible cause. And now, Miss Stoner, we must leave you, for if Dr Roylott returned and saw us, our journey would be in vain. Goodbye, and be brave, for if you will do what I have told you, you may rest assured that we shall soon drive away the dangers that threaten you.'

Sherlock Holmes and I had no difficulty in engaging a bedroom and sitting-room at the Crown Inn. They were on the upper floor, and from our window we could command a view of the avenue gate, and of the inhabited wing of Stoke Moran Manor House. At dusk we saw Dr Grimesby Roylott drive past, his huge form looming up beside the little figure of the lad who drove him. The boy had some slight difficulty in undoing the heavy iron gates, and we heard the hoarse roar of the Doctor's voice, and saw the fury with which he shook his clenched fists at him. The trap drove on, and a few minutes later we saw a sudden light spring up among the trees as the lamp was lit in one of the sitting-rooms.

'Do you know, Watson,' said Holmes, as we sat together in the gathering darkness, 'I have really some scruples as to taking you tonight. There is a distinct element of danger.'

'Can I be of assistance?'

'Your presence might be invaluable.'

'Then I shall certainly come.'

'It is very kind of you.'

'You speak of danger. You have evidently seen more in these rooms than was visible to me.'

'No, but I fancy that I may have deduced a little more. I imagine that you saw all that I did.'

'I saw nothing remarkable save the bell-rope, and what purpose that could answer I confess is more than I can imagine.'

'You saw the ventilator, too?'

'Yes, but I do not think that it is such a very unusual thing to have a small opening between two rooms. It was so small a rat could hardly pass through.'

'I knew that we should find a ventilator before ever we came to Stoke Moran.'

'My dear Holmes.'

'Oh, yes, I did. You remember in her statement she said that her sister could smell Dr Roylott's cigar. Now, of course that suggests at once that there must be a communication between the two rooms. It could only be a small one, or it would have been remarked upon at the coroner's inquiry. I deduced a ventilator.'

'But what harm can there be in that?'

'Well, there is at least a curious coincidence of dates. A ventilator is made, a cord is hung, and a lady who sleeps in the bed dies. Does not that strike you?'

'I cannot as yet see any connection.'

'Did you observe anything very peculiar about that bed?'

'No.'

'It was clamped to the floor. Did you ever see a bed fastened like that before?'

'I cannot say that I have.'

'The lady could not move her bed. It must always be in the same relative position to the ventilator and to the rope – for so we may call it, since it was clearly never meant for a bell-pull.'

'Holmes,' I cried, 'I seem to see dimly what you are hitting at. We are only just in time to prevent some subtle and horrible crime.'

'Subtle enough and horrible enough. When a doctor does go wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge. Palmer and Pritchard were among the heads of their profession. This man strikes even deeper, but, I think, Watson, that we shall be able to strike deeper still. But we shall have horrors enough before this night is over: for goodness sake let us have a quiet pipe, and turn our minds for a few hours to something more cheerful.'

About nine o'clock the light among the trees was extinguished, and all was dark in the direction of the Manor House. Two hours passed slowly away, and then, suddenly, just at the stroke of eleven, a single bright light shone out right in front of us.

'That is our signal,' said Holmes, springing to his feet; 'it comes from the middle window.'

As we passed out he exchanged a few words with the landlord, explaining that we were going on a late visit to an acquaintance, and that it was possible that we might spend the night there. A moment later we were out on the dark road, a chill wind blowing in our faces, and one yellow light twinkling in front of us through the gloom to guide us on our sombre errand.

There was little difficulty in entering the grounds, for unrepaired breaches gaped in the old park wall. Making our way among the trees, we reached the lawn, crossed it, and were about to enter through the window, when out from a clump of laurel bushes there darted what seemed to be a hideous and distorted child, who threw

itself on the grass with writhing limbs, and then ran swiftly across the lawn into the darkness.

'My God!' I whispered, 'did you see it?'

Holmes was for that moment as startled as I. His hand closed like a vice upon my wrist in his agitation. Then he broke into a low laugh, and put his lips to my ear.

'It is a nice household,' he murmured, 'that is the baboon.'

I had forgotten the strange pets which the doctor affected. There was a cheetah, too; perhaps we might find it upon our shoulders at any moment. I confess that I felt easier in my mind when, after following Holmes's example and slipping off my shoes, I found myself inside the bedroom. My companion noiselessly closed the shutters, moved the lamp on to the table, and cast his eyes round the room. All was as we had seen it in the day-time. Then creeping up to me and making a trumpet of his hand, he whispered into my ear again so gently that it was all that I could do to distinguish the words:

'The least sound would be fatal to our plans.'

I nodded to show that I had heard.

'We must sit without a light. He would see it through the ventilator.'

I nodded again.

'Do not go to sleep; your life may depend upon it. Have your pistol ready in case we should need it. I will sit on the side of the bed, and you in that chair.'

I took out my revolver and laid it on the corner of the table.

Holmes had brought up a long thin cane, and this he placed upon the bed beside him. By it he laid the box of matches and the stump of a candle. Then he turned down the lamp and we were left in darkness.

How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil? I could not hear a sound, not even a drawing of a breath, and yet I knew that my companion sat open-eyed, within a few feet of me, in the same state of nervous tension in which I was myself. The shutters cut off the least ray of light, and we waited in absolute darkness. From outside came the occasional cry of a nightbird, and once at our very window a long drawn, cat-like whine, which told us that the cheetah was indeed at liberty. Far away we could hear the deep tones of the parish clock, which boomed out every quarter of an hour. How long they seemed, those quarters! Twelve o'clock, and

one, and two, and three, and still we sat waiting silently for whatever might befall.

Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next room had lit a dark lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more, though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound became audible – a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bed-pull.

'You see it, Watson?' he yelled. 'You see it?'

But I saw nothing. At the moment when Holmes struck the light I heard a low, clear whistle, but the sudden glare flashing into my weary eyes made it impossible for me to tell what it was at which my friend lashed so savagely. I could, however, see that his face was deadly pale, and filled with horror and loathing.

He had ceased to strike, and was gazing up at the ventilator, when suddenly there broke from the silence of the night the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened. It swelled up louder and louder, a hoarse yell of pain and fear and anger all mingled in the one dreadful shriek. They say that away down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds. It struck cold to our hearts, and I stood gazing at Holmes, and he at me, until the last echoes of it had died away into the silence from which it rose.

'What can it mean?' I gasped.

'It means that it is all over,' Holmes answered. 'And perhaps, after all, it is for the best. Take your pistol, and we shall enter Dr Roylott's room.'

With a grave face he lit the lamp, and led the way down the corridor. Twice he struck at the chamber door without any reply from within. Then he turned the handle and entered, I at his heels, with the cocked pistol in my hand.

It was a singular sight which met our eyes. On the table stood a dark lantern with the shutter half open, throwing a brilliant beam of light upon the iron safe, the door of which was ajar. Beside this table, on the wooden chair, sat Dr Grimesby Roylott, clad in a long grey dressing-gown, his bare ankles protruding beneath, and his feet thrust into red heelless Turkish slippers. Across his lap lay the

short stock with the long lash which we had noticed during the day. His chin was cocked upwards, and his eyes were fixed in a dreadful rigid stare at the corner of the ceiling. Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tight round his head. As we entered he made neither sound nor motion.

'The band! the speckled band!' whispered Holmes.

I took a step forward: in an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome serpent.

'It is a swamp adder!' cried Holmes – 'the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten. Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another. Let us thrust this creature back into its den, and we can then remove Miss Stoner to some place of shelter, and let the county police know what has happened.'

As he spoke he drew the dog whip swiftly from the dead man's lap, and throwing the noose round the reptile's neck, he drew it from its horrid perch, and, carrying it at arm's length, threw it into the iron safe, which he closed upon it.

Such are the true facts of the death of Dr Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran. It is not necessary that I should prolong a narrative which has already run to too great a length, by telling how we broke the sad news to the terrified girl, how we conveyed her by the morning train to the care of her good aunt at Harrow, of how the slow process of official inquiry came to the conclusion that the Doctor met his fate while indiscreetly playing with a dangerous pet. The little which I had yet to learn of the case was told me by Sherlock Holmes as we travelled back next day.

'I had,' said he, 'come to an entirely erroneous conclusion, which shows, my dear Watson, how dangerous it always is to reason from insufficient data. The presence of the gipsies, and the use of the word "band", which was used by the poor girl, no doubt, to explain the appearance which she had caught a horrid glimpse of by the light of her match, were sufficient to put me upon an entirely wrong scent. I can only claim the merit that I instantly reconsidered my position when, however, it became clear to me that whatever danger threatened an occupant of the room could not come either from the window or the door. My attention was speedily drawn, as I have already remarked to you, to this ventilator, and to the bell-rope

which hung down to the bed. The discovery that this was a dummy, and that the bed was clamped to the floor, instantly gave rise to the suspicion that the rope was there as a bridge for something passing through the hole, and coming to the bed. The idea of a snake instantly occurred to me, and when I coupled it with my knowledge that the Doctor was furnished with a supply of creatures from India, I felt that I was probably on the right track. The idea of using a form of poison which could not possibly be discovered by any chemical test was just such a one as would occur to a clever and ruthless man who had had an Eastern training. The rapidity with which such a poison would take effect would also, from his point of view, be an advantage. It would be a sharp-eyed coroner indeed who could distinguish the two little dark punctures which would show where the poison fangs had done their work. Then I thought of the whistle. Of course, he must recall the snake before the morning light revealed it to the victim. He had trained it, probably by the use of the milk which we saw, to return to him when summoned. He would put it through the ventilator at the hour that he thought best, with the certainty that it would crawl down the rope, and land on the bed. It might or might not bite the occupant, perhaps she might escape every night for a week, but sooner or later she must fall a victim.

'I had come to these conclusions before ever I had entered his room. An inspection of his chair showed me that he had been in the habit of standing on it, which, of course, would be necessary in order that he should reach the ventilator. The sight of the safe, the saucer of milk, and the loop of whipcord were enough to finally dispel any doubts which may have remained. The metallic clang heard by Miss Stoner was obviously caused by her father hastily closing the door of his safe upon its terrible occupant. Having once made up my mind, you know the steps which I took in order to put the matter to the proof. I heard the creature hiss, as I have no doubt that you did also, and I instantly lit the light and attacked it.'

'With the result of driving it through the ventilator.'

'And also with the result of causing it to turn upon its master at the other side. Some of the blows of my cane came home, and roused its snakish temper, so that it flew upon the first person it saw. In this way I am no doubt indirectly responsible for Dr Grimesby Roylott's death, and I cannot say that it is likely to weigh very heavily upon my conscience.'

Kipling, Rudyard. The Man Who Would Be King & Other Stories. ed. Louis Cornell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.

RUDYARD KIPLING

The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes

Alive or dead—there is no other way.
Native Proverb

THERE is no invention about this tale. Jukes by accident stumbled upon a village that is well known to exist, though he is the only Englishman who has been there. A somewhat similar institution used to flourish on the outskirts of Calcutta, and there is a story that if you go into the heart of Bikanir, which is in the heart of the Great Indian Desert, you shall come across, not a village, but a town where the Dead who did not die, but may not live, have established their headquarters. And, since it is perfectly true that in the same Desert is a wonderful city where all the rich money-lenders retreat after they have made their fortunes (fortunes so vast that the owners cannot trust even the strong hand of the Government to protect them, but take refuge in the waterless sands), and drive sumptuous C-spring barouches, and buy beautiful girls, and decorate their palaces with gold and ivory and Minton* tiles and mother-o'-pearl, I do not see why Jukes's tale should not be true. He is a Civil Engineer, with a head for plans and distances and things of that kind, and he certainly would not take the trouble to invent imaginary traps. He could earn more by doing his legitimate work. He never varies the tale in the telling, and grows very hot and indignant when he thinks of the disrespectful treatment he received. He wrote this quite straightforwardly at first, but he has touched it up in places and introduced Moral Reflections: thus:—

In the beginning it all arose from a slight attack of fever. My work necessitated my being in camp for some months between Pakpattan and Mubarakpur—a desolate sandy stretch of country as every one who has had the misfortune to go there may know. My coolies were neither more nor less

exasperating than other gangs, and my work demanded sufficient attention to keep me from moping, had I been inclined to so unmanly a weakness.

On the 23rd December 1884 I felt a little feverish. There was a full moon at the time, and, in consequence, every dog near my tent was baying it. The brutes assembled in twos and threes and drove me frantic. A few days previously I had shot one loud-mouthed singer and suspended his carcass *in terrorem** about fifty yards from my tent-door, but his friends fell upon, fought for, and ultimately devoured the body; and, as it seemed to me, sang their hymns of thanksgiving afterwards with renewed energy.

The light-headedness which accompanies fever acts differently on different men. My irritation gave way, after a short time, to a fixed determination to slaughter one huge black-and-white beast who had been foremost in song and first in flight throughout the evening. Thanks to a shaking hand and a giddy head I had already missed him twice with both barrels of my shot-gun, when it struck me that my best plan would be to ride him down in the open and finish him off with a hog-spear. This, of course, was merely the semi-delirious notion of a fever-patient; but I remember that it struck me at the time as being eminently practical and feasible.

I therefore ordered my groom to saddle Pornic and bring him round quietly to the rear of my tent. When the pony was ready, I stood at his head prepared to mount and dash out as soon as the dog should again lift up his voice. Pornic, by the way, had not been out of his pickets for a couple of days; the night air was crisp and chilly; and I was armed with a specially long and sharp pair of persuaders* with which I had been rousing a sluggish cob that afternoon. You will easily believe, then, that when he was let go he went quickly. In one moment, for the brute bolted as straight as a die, the tent was left far behind, and we were flying over the smooth sandy soil at racing speed. In another we had passed the wretched dog, and I had almost forgotten why it was that I had taken horse and hog-spear.

The delirium of fever and the excitement of rapid motion

through the air must have taken away the remnant of my senses. I have a faint recollection of standing upright in my stirrups, and of brandishing my hog-spear at the great white moon that looked down so calmly on my mad gallop; and of shouting challenges to the camelthorn bushes as they whizzed past. Once or twice, I believe, I swayed forward on Pornic's neck, and literally hung on by my spurs—as the marks next morning showed.

The wretched beast went forward like a thing possessed, over what seemed to be a limitless expanse of moonlit sand. Next, I remember, the ground rose suddenly in front of us, and as we topped the ascent I saw the waters of the Sutlej shining like a silver bar below. Then Pornic blundered heavily on his nose, and we rolled together down some unseen slope.

I must have lost consciousness, for when I recovered I was lying on my stomach in a heap of soft white sand, and the dawn was beginning to break dimly over the edge of the slope down which I had fallen. As the light grew stronger I saw I was at the bottom of a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand, opening on one side directly on to the shoals of the Sutlej. My fever had altogether left me, and, with the exception of a slight dizziness in the head, I felt no bad effects from the fall overnight.

Pornic, who was standing a few yards away, was naturally a good deal exhausted, but had not hurt himself in the least. His saddle, a favourite polo one, was much knocked about, and had been twisted under his belly. It took me some time to put him to rights, and in the meantime I had ample opportunities of observing the spot into which I had so foolishly dropped.

At the risk of being considered tedious, I must describe it at length; inasmuch as an accurate mental picture of its peculiarities will be of material assistance in enabling the reader to understand what follows.

Imagine then, as I have said before, a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand with steeply-graded sand walls about thirty-five feet high. (The slope, I fancy, must have been about 65°.) This crater enclosed a level piece of ground about fifty yards

long by thirty at its broadest part, with a rude well in the centre. Round the bottom of the crater, about three feet from the level of the ground proper, ran a series of eighty-three semicircular, ovoid, square, and multilateral holes, all about three feet at the mouth. Each hole on inspection showed that it was carefully shored internally with drift-wood and bamboos, and over the mouth a wooden drip-board projected, like the peak of a jockey's cap, for two feet. No sign of life was visible in these tunnels, but a most sickening stench pervaded the entire amphitheatre—a stench fouler than any which my wanderings in Indian villages have introduced me to.

Having remounted Pornic, who was as anxious as I to get back to camp, I rode round the base of the horseshoe to find some place whence an exit would be practicable. The inhabitants, whoever they might be, had not thought fit to put in an appearance, so I was left to my own devices. My first attempt to 'rush' Pornic up the steep sand-banks showed me that I had fallen into a trap exactly on the same model as that which the ant-lion sets for its prey. At each step the shifting sand poured down from above in tons, and rattled on the drip-boards of the holes like small shot. A couple of ineffectual charges sent us both rolling down to the bottom, half choked with the torrents of sand; and I was constrained to turn my attention to the river-bank.

Here everything seemed easy enough. The sand-hills ran down to the river edge, it is true, but there were plenty of shoals and shallows across which I could gallop Pornic, and find my way back to *terra firma* by turning sharply to the right or the left. As I led Pornic over the sands I was startled by the faint pop of a rifle across the river; and at the same moment a bullet dropped with a sharp '*whit*' close to Pornic's head.

There was no mistaking the nature of the missile—a regulation Martini-Henry 'picket'.* About five hundred yards away a country-boat was anchored in mid-stream; and a jet of smoke drifting away from its bows in the still morning air showed me whence the delicate attention had come. Was ever a respectable gentleman in such an *impasse*? The treacherous sand-slope allowed no escape from a spot which I

had visited most involuntarily, and a promenade on the river frontage was the signal for a bombardment from some insane native in a boat. I'm afraid that I lost my temper very much indeed.

Another bullet reminded me that I had better save my breath to cool my porridge; and I retreated hastily up the sands and back to the horseshoe, where I saw that the noise of the rifle had drawn sixty-five human beings from the badger-holes which I had up till that point supposed to be untenanted. I found myself in the midst of a crowd of spectators—about forty men, twenty women, and one child who could not have been more than five years old. They were all scantily clothed in that salmon-coloured cloth which one associates with Hindu mendicants, and, at first sight, gave me the impression of a band of loathsome *fakirs*. The filth and repulsiveness of the assembly were beyond all description, and I shuddered to think what their life in the badger-holes must be.

Even in these days, when local self-government* has destroyed the great part of a native's respect for a Sahib, I have been accustomed to a certain amount of civility from my inferiors, and on approaching the crowd naturally expected that there would be some recognition of my presence. As a matter of fact there was, but it was by no means what I had looked for.

The ragged crew actually laughed at me—such laughter I hope I may never hear again. They cackled, yelled, whistled, and howled as I walked into their midst; some of them literally throwing themselves down on the ground in convulsions of unholy mirth. In a moment I had let go Pornic's head, and, irritated beyond expression at the morning's adventure, commenced cuffing those nearest to me with all the force I could. The wretches dropped under my blows like ninepins, and the laughter gave place to wails for mercy; while those yet untouched clasped me round the knees, imploring me in all sorts of uncouth tongues to spare them.

In the tumult, and just when I was feeling very much ashamed of myself for having thus easily given way to my

temper, a thin high voice murmured in English from behind my shoulder: 'Sahib! Sahib! Do you not know me? Sahib, it is Gunga Dass, the telegraph-master.'

I spun round quickly and faced the speaker.

Gunga Dass (I have, of course, no hesitation in mentioning the man's real name) I had known four years before as a Deccanee Brahmin* lent by the Punjab Government to one of the Khalsia States. He was in charge of a branch telegraph-office there, and when I had last met him was a jovial, full-stomached, portly Government servant with a marvellous capacity for making bad puns in English—a peculiarity which made me remember him long after I had forgotten his services to me in his official capacity. It is seldom that a Hindu makes English puns.

Now, however, the man was changed beyond all recognition. Caste-mark, stomach, slate-coloured continuations,* and unctuous speech were all gone. I looked at a withered skeleton, turbanless and almost naked, with long matted hair and deep-set codfish-eyes. But for a crescent-shaped scar on the left cheek—the result of an accident for which I was responsible—I should never have known him. But it was indubitably Gunga Dass, and—for this I was thankful—an English-speaking native who might at least tell me the meaning of all that I had gone through that day.

The crowd retreated to some distance as I turned towards the miserable figure and ordered him to show me some method of escaping from the crater. He held a freshly-plucked crow in his hand, and in reply to my question climbed slowly to a platform of sand which ran in front of the holes, and commenced lighting a fire there in silence. Dried bents, sand-poppies, and driftwood burn quickly; and I derived much consolation from the fact that he lit them with an ordinary sulphur match. When they were in a bright glow and the crow was neatly spitted in front thereof, Gunga Dass began without a word of preamble:—

'There are only two kinds of men, sar—the alive and the dead. When you are dead you are dead, but when you are alive you live.' (Here the crow demanded his attention for an instant as it twirled before the fire in danger of being burnt to

a cinder.) 'If you die at home and do not die when you come to the ghat to be burnt you come here.'

The nature of the reeking village was made plain now, and all that I had known or read of the grotesque and the horrible paled before the fact just communicated by the ex-Brahmin. Sixteen years ago, when I first landed in Bombay, I had been told by a wandering Armenian of the existence, somewhere in India, of a place to which such Hindus as had the misfortune to recover from trance or catalepsy were conveyed and kept, and I recollect laughing heartily at what I was then pleased to consider a traveller's tale. Sitting at the bottom of the sand-trap, the memory of Watson's Hotel, with its swinging punkahs, white-robed servants, and the sallow-faced Armenian, rose up in my mind as vividly as a photograph, and I burst into a loud fit of laughter. The contrast was too absurd!

Gunga Dass, as he bent over the unclean bird, watched me curiously. Hindus seldom laugh, and his surroundings were not such as to move him that way. He removed the crow solemnly from the wooden spit and as solemnly devoured it. Then he continued his story, which I give in his own words:—

'In epidemics of the cholera you are carried to be burnt almost before you are dead. When you come to the riverside the cold air, perhaps, makes you alive, and then, if you are only a little alive, mud is put on your nose and mouth and you die conclusively. If you are rather more alive, more mud is put; but if you are too lively, they let you go and take you away. I was too lively, and made protestation with anger against the indignities that they endeavoured to press upon me. In those days I was Brahmin and proud man. Now I am dead man and eat'—here he eyed the well-gnawed breast-bone with the first sign of emotion that I had seen in him since we met—'crows, and—other things. They took me from my sheets when they saw that I was too lively and gave me medicines for one week, and I survived successfully. Then they sent me by rail from my place to Okara Station, with a man to take care of me; and at Okara Station we met two other men, and they conducted us three on camels, in the

night, from Okara Station to this place, and they propelled me from the top to the bottom, and the other two succeeded, and I have been here ever since two and a half years. Once I was Brahmin and proud man, and now I eat crows.'

'There is no way of getting out?'

'None of what kind at all. When I first came I made experiments frequently, and all the others also, but we have always succumbed to the sand which is precipitated upon our heads.'

'But surely,' I broke in at this point, 'the river-front is open, and it is worth while dodging the bullets; while at night——'

I had already matured a rough plan of escape which a natural instinct of selfishness forbade me sharing with Gunga Dass. He, however, divined my unspoken thought almost as soon as it was formed; and, to my intense astonishment, gave vent to a long low chuckle of derision—the laughter, be it understood, of a superior or at least of an equal.

'You will not'—he had dropped the 'sir' after his first sentence—'make any escape that way. But you can try. I have tried. Once only.'

The sensation of nameless terror which I had in vain attempted to strive against overmastered me completely. My long fast—it was now close upon ten o'clock, and I had eaten nothing since tiffin on the previous day—combined with the violent agitation of the ride had exhausted me, and I verily believe that, for a few minutes, I acted as one mad. I hurled myself against the sand-slope. I ran round the base of the crater, blaspheming and praying by turns. I crawled out among the sedges of the river-front, only to be driven back each time in an agony of nervous dread by the rifle-bullets which cut up the sand round me—for I dared not face the death of a mad dog among that hideous crowd—and so fell, spent and raving, at the curb of the well. No one had taken the slightest notice of an exhibition which makes me blush hotly even when I think of it now.

Two or three men trod on my panting body as they drew water, but they were evidently used to this sort of thing, and had no time to waste upon me. Gunga Dass, indeed, when he

had banked the embers of his fire with sand, was at some pains to throw half a cupful of fetid water over my head, an attention for which I could have fallen on my knees and thanked him, but he was laughing all the while in the same mirthless, wheezy key that greeted me on my first attempt to force the shoals. And so, in a half-fainting state, I lay till noon. Then, being only a man after all, I felt hungry, and said as much to Gunga Dass, whom I had begun to regard as my natural protector. Following the impulse of the outer world when dealing with natives, I put my hand into my pocket and drew out four annas. The absurdity of the gift struck me at once, and I was about to replace the money.

Gunga Dass, however, cried: 'Give me the money, all you have, or I will get help, and we will kill you!'

A Briton's first impulse, I believe, is to guard the contents of his pockets; but a moment's thought showed me the folly of differing with the one man who had it in his power to make me comfortable; and with whose help it was possible that I might eventually escape from the crater. I gave him all the money in my possession, Rs. 9–8–5—nine rupees, eight annas, and five pice—for I always keep small change as *bakshish* when I am in camp. Gunga Dass clutched the coins, and hid them at once in his ragged loin-cloth, looking round to assure himself that no one had observed us.

'*Now* I will give you something to eat,' said he.

What pleasure my money could have given him I am unable to say; but inasmuch as it did please him I was not sorry that I had parted with it so readily, for I had no doubt that he would have had me killed if I had refused. One does not protest against the doings of a den of wild beasts; and my companions were lower than any beasts. While I ate what Gunga Dass had provided, a coarse *chapatti** and a cupful of the foul well-water, the people showed not the faintest sign of curiosity—that curiosity which is so rampant, as a rule, in an Indian village.

I could even fancy that they despised me. At all events they treated me with the most chilling indifference, and Gunga Dass was nearly as bad. I plied him with questions about the terrible village, and received extremely unsatisfactory

answers. So far as I could gather, it had been in existence from time immemorial—whence I concluded that it was at least a century old—and during that time no one had ever been known to escape from it. (I had to control myself here with both hands, lest the blind terror should lay hold of me a second time and drive me raving round the crater.) Gunga Dass took a malicious pleasure in emphasizing this point and in watching me wince. Nothing that I could do would induce him to tell me who the mysterious 'They' were.

'It is so ordered,' he would reply, 'and I do not yet know any one who has disobeyed the orders.'

'Only wait till my servants find that I am missing,' I retorted, 'and I promise you that this place shall be cleared off the face of the earth, and I'll give you a lesson in civility, too, my friend.'

'Your servants would be torn in pieces before they came near this place; and, besides, you are dead, my dear friend. It is not your fault, of course, but none the less you are dead *and* buried.'

At irregular intervals supplies of food, I was told, were dropped down from the land side into the amphitheatre, and the inhabitants fought for them like wild beasts. When a man felt his death coming on he retreated to his lair and died there. The body was sometimes dragged out of the hole and thrown on to the sand, or allowed to rot where it lay.

The phrase 'thrown on to the sand' caught my attention, and I asked Gunga Dass whether this sort of thing was not likely to breed a pestilence.

'That,' said he, with another of his wheezy chuckles, 'you may see for yourself subsequently. You will have much time to make observations.'

Whereat, to his great delight, I winced once more and hastily continued the conversation: 'And how do you live here from day to day? What do you do?' The question elicited exactly the same answer as before—coupled with the information that 'this place is like your European Heaven*; there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.'

Gunga Dass had been educated at a Mission School, and, as he himself admitted, had he only changed his religion 'like a wise man,' might have avoided the living grave which was now his portion. But as long as I was with him I fancy he was happy.

Here was a Sahib, a representative of the dominant race, helpless as a child and completely at the mercy of his native neighbours. In a deliberate lazy way he set himself to torture me as a schoolboy would devote a rapturous half-hour to watching the agonies of an impaled beetle, or as a ferret in a blind burrow might glue himself comfortably to the neck of a rabbit. The burden of his conversation was that there was no escape 'of no kind whatever,' and that I should stay here till I died and was 'thrown on to the sand.' If it were possible to forejudge the conversation of the Damned on the advent of a new soul in their abode, I should say that they would speak as Gunga Dass did to me throughout that long afternoon. I was powerless to protest or answer; all my energies being devoted to a struggle against the inexplicable terror that threatened to overwhelm me again and again. I can compare the feeling to nothing except the struggles of a man against the overpowering nausea of the Channel passage—only my agony was of the spirit and infinitely more terrible.

As the day wore on, the inhabitants began to appear in full strength to catch the rays of the afternoon sun, which were now sloping in at the mouth of the crater. They assembled by little knots, and talked among themselves without even throwing a glance in my direction. About four o'clock, so far as I could judge, Gunga Dass rose and dived into his lair for a moment, emerging with a live crow in his hands. The wretched bird was in a most draggled and deplorable condition, but seemed to be in no way afraid of its master. Advancing cautiously to the river-front, Gunga Dass stepped from tussock to tussock until he had reached a smooth patch of sand directly in the line of the boat's fire. The occupants of the boat took no notice. Here he stopped, and, with a couple of dexterous turns of the wrist, pegged the bird on its back with outstretched wings. As was only natural, the crow began to shriek at once and beat the air with its claws. In a few seconds the clamour had attracted the attention of a bevy of wild crows on a shoal a few hundred yards away, where they

were discussing something that looked like a corpse. Half-a-dozen crows flew over at once to see what was going on, and also, as it proved, to attack the pinioned bird. Gunga Dass, who had lain down on a tussock, motioned to me to be quiet, though I fancy this was a needless precaution. In a moment, and before I could see how it happened, a wild crow, which had grappled with the shrieking and helpless bird, was entangled in the latter's claws, swiftly disengaged by Gunga Dass, and pegged down beside its companion in adversity. Curiosity, its seemed, overpowered the rest of the flock, and almost before Gunga Dass and I had time to withdraw to the tussock, two more captives were struggling in the upturned claws of the decoys. So the chase—if I can give it so dignified a name—continued until Gunga Dass had captured seven crows. Five of them he throttled at once, reserving two for further operations another day. I was a good deal impressed by this, to me, novel method of securing food, and complimented Gunga Dass on his skill.

'It is nothing to do,' said he. 'To-morrow you must do it for me. You are stronger than I am.'

This calm assumption of superiority upset me not a little, and I answered peremptorily: 'Indeed, you old ruffian? What do you think I have given you money for?'

'Very well,' was the unmoved reply. 'Perhaps not to-morrow, nor the day after, nor subsequently; but in the end, and for many years, you will catch crows and eat crows, and you will thank your European God that you have crows to catch and eat.'

I could have cheerfully strangled him for this, but judged it best under the circumstances to smother my resentment. An hour later I was eating one of the crows; and, as Gunga Dass had said, thanking my God that I had a crow to eat. Never as long as I live shall I forget that evening meal. The whole population were squatting on the hard sand platform opposite their dens, huddled over tiny fires of refuse and dried rushes. Death, having once laid his hand upon these men and forborne to strike, seemed to stand aloof from them now; for most of our company were old men, bent and worn and twisted with years, and women aged to all appearance as

the Fates themselves. They sat together in knots and talked—God only knows what they found to discuss—in low equable tones, curiously in contrast to the strident babble with which natives are accustomed to make day hideous. Now and then an access of that sudden fury which had possessed me in the morning would lay hold on a man or woman; and with yells and imprecations the sufferer would attack the steep slope until, baffled and bleeding, he fell back on the platform incapable of moving a limb. The others would never even raise their eyes when this happened, as men too well aware of the futility of their fellows' attempts and wearied with their useless repetition. I saw four such outbursts in the course of that evening.

Gunga Dass took an eminently businesslike view of my situation, and while we were dining—I can afford to laugh at the recollection now, but it was painful enough at the time—propounded the terms on which he would consent to 'do' for me. My nine rupees eight annas, he argued, at the rate of three annas a day, would provide me with food for fifty-one days, or about seven weeks; that is to say, he would be willing to cater for me for that length of time. At the end of it I was to look after myself. For a further consideration—*videlicet* my boots—he would be willing to allow me to occupy the den next to his own, and would supply me with as much dried grass for bedding as he could spare.

'Very well, Gunga Dass,' I replied; 'to the first terms I cheerfully agree, but, as there is nothing on earth to prevent my killing you as you sit here and taking everything that you have' (I thought of the two invaluable crows at the time), 'I flatly refuse to give you my boots and shall take whichever den I please.'

The stroke was a bold one, and I was glad when I saw that it had succeeded. Gunga Dass changed his tone immediately, and disavowed all intention of asking for my boots. At the time it did not strike me as at all strange that I, a Civil Engineer, a man of thirteen years' standing in the Service, and, I trust, an average Englishman, should thus calmly threaten murder and violence against the man who had, for a consideration it is true, taken me under his wing. I had left

the world, it seemed, for centuries. I was as certain then as I am now of my own existence, that in the accursed settlement there was no law save that of the strongest; that the living dead men had thrown behind them every canon of the world which had cast them out; and that I had to depend for my own life on my strength and vigilance alone. The crew of the ill-fated *Mignonette** are the only men who would understand my frame of mind. 'At present,' I argued to myself, 'I am strong and a match for six of these wretches. It is imperatively necessary that I should, for my own sake, keep both health and strength until the hour of my release comes—if it ever does.'

Fortified with these resolutions, I ate and drank as much as I could, and made Gunga Dass understand that I intended to be his master, and that the least sign of insubordination on his part would be visited with the only punishment I had it in my power to inflict—sudden and violent death. Shortly after this I went to bed. That is to say, Gunga Dass gave me a double armful of dried bents which I thrust down the mouth of the lair to the right of his, and followed myself, feet foremost; the hole running about nine feet into the sand with a slight downward inclination, and being neatly shored with timbers. From my den, which faced the river-front, I was able to watch the waters of the Sutlej flowing past under the light of a young moon and compose myself to sleep as best I might.

The horrors of that night I shall never forget. My den was nearly as narrow as a coffin, and the sides had been worn smooth and greasy by the contact of innumerable naked bodies, added to which it smelt abominably. Sleep was altogether out of the question to one in my excited frame of mind. As the night wore on, it seemed that the entire amphitheatre was filled with legions of unclean devils that, trooping up from the shoals below, mocked the unfortunates in their lairs.

Personally I am not of an imaginative temperament—very few Engineers are—but on that occasion I was as completely prostrated with nervous terror as any woman. After half an hour or so, however, I was able once more to calmly review my chances of escape. Any exit by the steep sand walls was, of

course, impracticable. I had been thoroughly convinced of this some time before. It was possible, just possible, that I might, in the uncertain moonlight, safely run the gauntlet of the rifle shots. The place was so full of terror for me that I was prepared to undergo any risk in leaving it. Imagine my delight, then, when after creeping stealthily to the river-front I found that the infernal boat was not there. My freedom lay before me in the next few steps!

By walking out to the first shallow pool that lay at the foot of the projecting left horn of the horseshoe, I could wade across, turn the flank of the crater, and make my way inland. Without a moment's hesitation I marched briskly past the tussocks where Gunga Dass had snared the crows, and out in the direction of the smooth white sand beyond. My first step from the tufts of dried grass showed me how utterly futile was any hope of escape; for, as I put my foot down, I felt an indescribable drawing, sucking motion of the sand below. Another moment and my leg was swallowed up nearly to the knee. In the moonlight the whole surface of the sand seemed to be shaken with devilish delight at my disappointment. I struggled clear, sweating with terror and exertion, back to the tussocks behind me and fell on my face.

My only means of escape from the semicircle was protected by a quicksand!

How long I lay I have not the faintest idea; but I was roused at last by the malevolent chuckle of Gunga Dass at my ear. 'I would advise you, Protector of the Poor' (the ruffian was speaking English), 'to return to your house. It is unhealthy to lie down here. Moreover, when the boat returns you will most certainly be rifled at.' He stood over me in the dim light of the dawn, chuckling and laughing to himself. Suppressing my first impulse to catch the man by the neck and throw him on to the quicksand, I rose sullenly and followed him to the platform below the burrows.

Suddenly, and futilely, as I thought while I spoke, I asked: 'Gunga Dass, what is the good of the boat if I can't get out *anyhow*?' I recollect that even in my deepest trouble I had been speculating vaguely on the waste of ammunition in guarding an already well-protected foreshore.

Gunga Dass laughed again and made answer: 'They have the boat only in daytime. It is for the reason that *there is a way*. I hope we shall have the pleasure of your company for much longer time. It is a pleasant spot when you have been here some years and eaten roast crow long enough.'

I staggered, numbed and helpless, towards the fetid burrow allotted to me, and fell asleep. An hour or so later I was awakened by a piercing scream—the shrill, high-pitched scream of a horse in pain. Those who have once heard that will never forget the sound. I found some little difficulty in scrambling out of the burrow. When I was in the open, I saw Pornic, my poor old Pornic, lying dead on the sandy soil. How they had killed him I cannot guess. Gunga Dass explained that horse was better than crow, and 'greatest good of greatest number is political maxim. We are now Republic, Mister Jukes, and you are entitled to a fair share of the beast. If you like, we will pass a vote of thanks. Shall I propose?'

Yes, we were a Republic indeed! A Republic of wild beasts penned at the bottom of a pit, to eat and fight and sleep till we died. I attempted no protest of any kind, but sat down and stared at the hideous sight in front of me. In less time almost than it takes me to write this, Pornic's body was divided, in some unclean way or other; the men and women had dragged the fragments on to the platform and were preparing their morning meal. Gunga Dass cooked mine. The almost irresistible impulse to fly at the sand walls until I was wearied laid hold of me afresh, and I had to struggle against it with all my might. Gunga Dass was offensively jocular till I told him that if he addressed another remark of any kind whatever to me I should strangle him where he sat. This silenced him till the silence became insupportable, and I bade him say something.

'You will live here till you die like the other Feringhi,'* he said coolly, watching me over the fragment of gristle that he was gnawing.

'What other Sahib, you swine? Speak at once, and don't stop to tell me a lie.'

'He is over there,' answered Gunga Dass, pointing to a burrow-mouth about four doors to the left of my own. 'You

can see for yourself. He died in the burrow as you will die, and I will die, and as all these men and women and the one child will also die.'

'For pity's sake, tell me all you know about him. Who was he? When did he come, and when did he die?'

This appeal was a weak step on my part. Gunga Dass only leered and replied: 'I will not—unless you give me something first.'

Then I recollected where I was, and struck the man between the eyes, partially stunning him. He stepped down from the platform at once, and, cringing and fawning and weeping and attempting to embrace my feet, led me round to the burrow which he had indicated.

'I know nothing whatever about the gentleman. Your God be my witness that I do not. He was as anxious to escape as you were, and he was shot from the boat, though we all did all things to prevent him from attempting. He was shot here.' Gunga Dass laid his hand on his lean stomach and bowed to the earth.

'Well, and what then? Go on!'

'And then—and then, Your Honour, we carried him into his house and gave him water, and put wet cloths on the wound, and he laid down in his house and gave up the ghost.'

'In how long? In how long?'

'About half an hour after he received his wound. I call Vishnu* to witness,' yelled the wretched man, 'that I did everything for him. Everything which was possible, that I did!'

He threw himself down on the ground and clasped my ankles. But I had my doubts about Gunga Dass's benevolence, and kicked him off as he lay protesting.

'I believe you robbed him of everything he had. But I can find out in a minute or two. How long was the Sahib here?'

'Nearly a year and a half. I think he must have gone mad. But hear me swear, Protector of the Poor! Won't Your Honour hear me swear that I never touched an article that belonged to him? What is Your Worship going to do?'

I had taken Gunga Dass by the waist and had hauled him on to the platform opposite the deserted burrow. As I did so I

thought of my wretched fellow-prisoner's unspeakable misery among all these horrors for eighteen months, and the final agony of dying like a rat in a hole, with a bullet-wound in the stomach. Gunga Dass fancied I was going to kill him and howled pitifully. The rest of the population, in the plethora that follows a full flesh meal, watched us without stirring.

'Go inside, Gunga Dass,' said I, 'and fetch it out.'

I was feeling sick and faint with horror now. Gunga Dass nearly rolled off the platform and howled aloud.

'But I am Brahmin, Sahib—a high-caste Brahmin. By your soul, by your father's soul, do not make me do this thing!'

'Brahmin or no Brahmin, by my soul and my father's soul, in you go!' I said, and, seizing him by the shoulders, I crammed his head into the mouth of the burrow, kicked the rest of him in, and, sitting down, covered my face with my hands.

At the end of a few minutes I heard a rustle and a creak; then Gunga Dass in a sobbing, choking whisper speaking to himself; then a soft thud—and I uncovered my eyes.

The dry sand had turned the corpse entrusted to its keeping into a yellow-brown mummy. I told Gunga Dass to stand off while I examined it. The body—clad in an olive-green hunting-suit much stained and worn, with leather pads on the shoulders—was that of a man between thirty and forty, above middle height, with light sandy hair, long moustache, and a rough unkempt beard. The left canine of the upper jaw was missing, and a portion of the lobe of the right ear was gone. On the second finger of the left hand was a ring—a shield-shaped bloodstone set in gold, with a monogram that might have been either 'B. K.' or 'B. L.' On the third finger of the right hand was a silver ring in the shape of a coiled cobra, much worn and tarnished. Gunga Dass deposited a handful of trifles he had picked out of the burrow at my feet, and, covering the face of the body with my handkerchief, I turned to examine these. I give the full list in the hope that it may lead to the identification of the unfortunate man:—

1. Bowl of a briarwood pipe, serrated at the edge; much worn and blackened; bound with string at the screw.

2. Two patent-lever keys; wards of both broken.

3. Tortoise-shell-handled penknife, silver or nickel, name-plate marked with monogram 'B. K.'

4. Envelope, postmark undecipherable, bearing a Victorian stamp, addressed to 'Miss Mon——' (rest illegible)—'ham'—'nt.'

5. Imitation crocodile-skin notebook with pencil. First forty-five pages blank; four and a half illegible; fifteen others filled with private memoranda relating chiefly to three persons—a Mrs L. Singleton, abbreviated several times to 'Lot Single', 'Mrs S. May', and 'Garmison', referred to in places as 'Jerry' or 'Jack'.

6. Handle of small-sized hunting-knife. Blade snapped short. Buck's horn, diamond-cut, with swivel and ring on the butt; fragment of cotton cord attached.

It must not be supposed that I inventoried all these things on the spot as fully as I have here written them down. The notebook first attracted my attention, and I put it in my pocket with a view to studying it later on. The rest of the articles I conveyed to my burrow for safety's sake, and there, being a methodical man, I inventoried them. I then returned to the corpse and ordered Gunga Dass to help me to carry it out to the river-front. While we were engaged in this, the exploded shell of an old brown cartridge dropped out of one of the pockets and rolled at my feet. Gunga Dass had not seen it; and I fell to thinking that a man does not carry exploded cartridge-cases, especially 'browns', which will not bear loading twice, about with him when shooting. In other words, that cartridge-case had been fired inside the crater. Consequently there must be a gun somewhere. I was on the verge of asking Gunga Dass, but checked myself, knowing that he would lie. We laid the body down on the edge of the quicksand by the tussocks. It was my intention to push it out and let it be swallowed up—the only possible mode of burial that I could think of. I ordered Gunga Dass to go away.

Then I gingerly put the corpse out on the quicksand. In doing so—it was lying face downward—I tore the frail and rotten khaki shooting-coat open, disclosing a hideous cavity in the back. I have already told you that the dry sand had, as it

were, mummified the body. A moment's glance showed that the gaping hole had been caused by a gunshot wound; the gun must have been fired with the muzzle almost touching the back. The shooting-coat, being intact, had been drawn over the body after death, which must have been instantaneous. The secret of the poor wretch's death was plain to me in a flash. Some one of the crater, presumably Gunga Dass, must have shot him with his own gun—the gun that fitted the brown cartridges. He had never attempted to escape in the face of the rifle-fire from the boat.

I pushed the corpse out hastily, and saw it sink from sight literally in a few seconds. I shuddered as I watched. In a dazed, half-conscious way I turned to peruse the notebook. A stained and discoloured slip of paper had been inserted between the binding and the back, and dropped out as I opened the pages. This is what it contained: '*Four out from crow-clump; three left; nine out; two right; three back; two left; fourteen out; two left; seven out; one left; nine back; two right; six back; four right; seven back.*'* The paper had been burnt and charred at the edges. What it meant I could not understand. I sat down on the dried bents turning it over and over between my fingers, until I was aware of Gunga Dass standing immediately behind me with glowing eyes and outstretched hands.

'Have you got it?' he panted. 'Will you not let me look at it also? I swear that I will return it.'

'Got what? Return what?' I asked.

'That which you have in your hands. It will help us both.' He stretched out his long bird-like talons, trembling with eagerness.

'I could never find it,' he continued. 'He had secreted it about his person. Therefore I shot him, but nevertheless I was unable to obtain it.'

Gunga Dass had quite forgotten his little fiction about the rifle-bullet. I heard him calmly. Morality is blunted by consorting with the Dead who are alive.

'What on earth are you raving about? What is it you want me to give you?'

'The piece of paper in the notebook. It will help us both.

Oh, you fool! You fool! Can you not see what it will do for us? We shall escape!'

His voice rose almost to a scream, and he danced with excitement before me. I own I was moved at the chance of getting away.

'Do you mean to say that this slip of paper will help us? What does it mean?'

'Read it aloud! Read it aloud! I beg and I pray to you to read it aloud.'

I did so. Gunga Dass listened delightedly, and drew an irregular line in the sand with his fingers.

'See now! It was the length of his gun-barrels without the stock. I have those barrels. Four gun-barrels out from the place where I caught crows. Straight out; do you mind me? Then three left. Ah! Now well I remember how that man worked it out night after night. Then nine out, and so on. Out is always straight before you across the quicksand to the north. He told me so before I killed him.'

'But if you knew all this why didn't you get out before?'

'I did *not* know it. He told me that he was working it out a year and a half ago, and how he was working it out night after night when the boat had gone away, and he could get out near the quicksand safely. Then he said that we would get away together. But I was afraid that he would leave me behind one night when he had worked it all out, and so I shot him. Besides, it is not advisable that the men who once get in here should escape. Only I, and *I* am a Brahmin.'

The hope of escape had brought Gunga Dass's caste back to him. He stood up, walked about, and gesticulated violently. Eventually I managed to make him talk soberly, and he told me how this Englishman had spent six months night after night in exploring, inch by inch, the passage across the quicksand; how he had declared it to be simplicity itself up to within about twenty yards of the river-bank after turning the flank of the left horn of the horseshoe. This much he had evidently not completed when Gunga Dass shot him with his own gun.

In my frenzy of delight at the possibilities of escape I recollect shaking hands wildly with Gunga Dass, after we had

decided that we were to make an attempt to get away that very night. It was weary work waiting throughout the afternoon.

About ten o'clock, as far as I could judge, when the moon had just risen above the lip of the crater, Gunga Dass made a move for his burrow to bring out the gun-barrels whereby to measure our path. All the other wretched inhabitants had retired to their lairs long ago. The guardian boat had drifted down-stream some hours before, and we were utterly alone by the crow-clump. Gunga Dass, while carrying the gun-barrels, let slip the piece of paper which was to be our guide. I stooped down hastily to recover it, and, as I did so, I was aware that the creature was aiming a violent blow at the back of my head with the gun-barrels. It was too late to turn round. I must have received the blow somewhere on the nape of the neck, for I fell senseless at the edge of the quicksand.

When I recovered consciousness the moon was going down, and I was sensible of intolerable pain in the back of my head. Gunga Dass had disappeared and my mouth was full of blood. I lay down again and prayed that I might die without more ado. Then the unreasoning fury which I have before mentioned laid hold upon me, and I staggered inland towards the walls of the crater. It seemed that some one was calling to me in a whisper—'Sahib! Sahib! Sahib!' exactly as my bearer used to call me in the mornings. I fancied that I was delirious until a handful of sand fell at my feet. Then I looked up and saw a head peering down into the amphitheatre—the head of Dunnoo, my dog-boy, who attended to my collies. As soon as he had attracted my attention, he held up his hand and showed a rope. I motioned, staggering to and fro the while, that he should throw it down. It was a couple of leather punkah-ropes knotted together, with a loop at one end. I slipped the loop over my head and under my arms; heard Dunnoo urge something forward; was conscious that I was being dragged, face downward, up the steep sand-slope, and the next instant found myself choked and half-fainting on the sand-hills overlooking the crater. Dunnoo, with his face ashy-grey in the moonlight, implored me not to stay, but to get back to my tent at once.

It seems that he had tracked Pornic's footprints fourteen miles across the sands to the crater; had returned and told my servants, who flatly refused to meddle with any one, white or black, once fallen into the hideous Village of the Dead; whereupon Dunnoo had taken one of my ponies and a couple of punkah-ropes, returned to the crater, and hauled me out as I have described.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

IN an effort to keep the number of notes within reasonable bounds, I have in most cases excluded the following categories:

Rare words that can be found in standard British and American dictionaries are not glossed: exceptions are obsolete slang, words with significant changes of meaning, and some technical terms, mostly military.

Place names. Writing with an eye on his Anglo-Indian public, Kipling worked local place names into the texture of his stories in order to emphasize the ordinariness of their settings. To avoid a plethora of 'gazetteer' entries, I have annotated only place names that carry particular significance in their fictional context.

Biographical sources. As Kipling was writing directly from his own experience during the Indian years, there has been much speculation concerning the identity of his sources and models. I have called attention to this background material only in cases where it appears to illuminate the meaning of the fiction.

Every editor of Kipling's writings owes an incalculable debt to R. E. Harbord and the members of the Kipling Society who collaborated on *The Readers' Guide to Rudyard Kipling's Work* (Canterbury and Bournemouth, 1961–72). I have borrowed freely from this wonderful compendium of Kipling lore and, for the most part, silently. In one or two places I have cited the *Readers' Guide*, usually where I have been unable to verify the reference, or where the older work includes a body of scholarship too significant to pass over but too extensive to reproduce.

The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes: first published December 1885 in *Quartette*, a Christmas annual written by the four members of the Kipling family and produced by the *Civil and Military Gazette*.

A manuscript diary now in the possession of Harvard University reveals that Kipling was at work on the story as early as August 1884: together with two other very early stories—'The Gate of the Hundred Sorrows' (*Plain Tales from the Hills*) and 'The Dream of Duncan Parrenness' (*Life's Handicap*)—it reflects the dominant influence of Poe's tales of the fantastic.

Like 'The Phantom 'Rickshaw', its companion-piece in *Quartette*, 'Morrowbie Jukes' was significantly altered by the addition of an introductory paragraph when it was reprinted in the Indian Railway Library series. The place-names locate the City of the Dead on the bank of the Sutlej River, in a desolate region about one hundred miles from Lahore.

3 *Minton*: fine English porcelain produced in Stoke-on-Trent.

4 *in terrorem*: as an object of fear.
persuaders: spurs.

6 *Martini-Henry*: rifle issued to the British Army after 1875.
picket: rifle bullet.

7 *local self-government*: a controversial policy introduced by Lord Ripon as Viceroy to help the political education of Indians.

8 *Deccanee Brahmin*: Hindu of the highest caste, from the Deccan Plateau in South Central India and therefore far from home in the Punjab.
continuations: trousers (slang).

11 *chapatti*: round flat cake of unleavened bread, the common food of the Indian poor.

12 *Heaven*: in his reproof of the Sadducees, who ask him about a woman multiply widowed, Jesus replies, 'In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven' (Matthew 22: 23–30).

16 *Mignonette*: a *cause célèbre* of 1884. Cast away in a storm, the crew of the yacht *Mignonette* escaped the wreck with scant rations; after nearly three weeks of atrocious suffering they were driven to murder and cannibalism.

18 *Feringhi*: European.

19 *Vishnu*: one of the three chief gods in Hindu mythology.

22 *seven back*: the path has been plotted in different ways by curious readers, among them Edward Lucas White. He sent Kipling a copy of his chart: Kipling checked his findings and agreed that the path led nowhere (*Kipling Journal*, December 1985).

26 *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*: first published December 1885 in *Quartette*; reprinted in *The Phantom 'Rickshaw* December 1888.

Kipling associated the tale with the first appearance of his 'Personal Daemon', an inner voice which 'came to me early when I sat bewildered among other notions, and said: "Take this and no other." I obeyed, and was rewarded . . . Some of it was weak, much was bad and out of key; but it was my first

(1903)

CHARLOTTE MEW

A WHITE NIGHT

'THE incident', said Cameron, 'is spoiled inevitably in the telling, by its merely accidental quality of melodrama, its sensational machinery, which, to the view of anyone who didn't witness it, is apt to blur the finer outlines of the scene. The subtlety, or call it the significance, is missed, and unavoidably, as one attempts to put the thing before you, in a certain casual crudity, and inessential violence of fact. Make it a mediaeval matter – put it back some centuries – and the affair takes on its proper tone immediately, is tinctured with the sinister solemnity which actually enveloped it. But as it stands, a recollection, an experience, a picture, well, it doesn't reproduce; one must have the original if one is going to hang it on one's wall.'

In spite of which I took it down the night he told it and, thanks to a trick of accuracy, I believe you have the story as I heard it, almost word for word.

It was in the spring of 1876, a rainless spring, as I remember it, of white roads and brown crops and steely skies.

Sent out the year before on mining business, I had been then some eighteen months in Spain. My job was finished; I was leaving the Black Country, planning a vague look round, perhaps a little sport among the mountains, when a letter from my sister Ella laid the dust of doubtful schemes.

She was on a discursive honeymoon. They had come on from Florence to Madrid, and disappointed with the rank modernity of their last halt, wished to explore some of the least known towns of the interior: 'Something unique, untrodden, and uncivilised', she indicated modestly. Further, if I were free and amiable, and so on, they would join me anywhere in Andalusia. I was in fact to show them round.

I did 'my possible'; we roughed it pretty thoroughly, but the young person's passion for the strange bore her robustly through the risks and discomforts of those wilder districts which at best, perhaps, are hardly woman's ground.

King, on occasion nursed anxiety, and mourned his little luxuries; Ella accepted anything that befell, from dirt to danger, with a humorous composure dating back to nursery days – she had the instincts and the physique of a traveller, with a brilliancy of touch and a decision of attack on human instruments which told. She took our mule-drivers in hand with some success. Later, no doubt, their wretched beasts were made to smart for it, in the reaction from a lull in that habitual brutality which makes the animals of Spain a real blot upon the gay indifferentism of its people.

It pleased her to devise a lurid *Dies Irae* for these affable barbarians, a special process of reincarnation for the Spaniard generally, whereby the space of one dog's life at least should be ensured to him.

And on the day I'm coming to, a tedious, dislocating journey in a springless cart had brought her to the verge of quite unusual weariness, a weariness of spirit only, she protested, waving a hand toward our man who lashed and sang alternately, fetching at intervals a sunny smile for the poor lady's vain remonstrances before he lashed again.

The details of that day – our setting forth, our ride, and our arrival – all the minor episodes stand out with singular

Only the vaguest outlines were discernible; the lancets of the lantern at the transept crossing, and a large rose window at the western end seemed, at a glance, the only means of light, and this was failing, leaving fast the fading panes.

One half-detected, almost guessed, the blind triforium, but the enormous width of the great building made immediate mark. The darkness, masking as it did distinctive features, emphasised the sense of space, which, like the spirit of a shrouded form, gained force, intensity, from its material disguise.

We stayed not more than a few minutes, but on reaching the small door again we found it fast; bolted or locked undoubtedly in the short interval. Of course we put our backs to it and made a pretty violent outcry, hoping the worthy sacristan was hanging round or somewhere within call. Of course he wasn't. We tried two other doors; both barred, and there was nothing left for it but noise. We shouted, I suppose, for half an hour, intermittently, and King persisted hoarsely after I had given out.

The echo of the vast, dark, empty place caught up our cries, seeming to hold them in suspension for a second in the void invisibility of roof and arches, then to fling them down in hollow repetition with an accent of unearthly mimicry which struck a little grimly on one's ear; and when we paused the silence seemed alert, expectant, ready to repel the first recurrence of unholy clamour. Finally, we gave it up; the hope of a release before the dawn, at earliest, was too forlorn. King, explosive and solicitous, was solemnly perturbed, but Ella faced the situation with an admirable tranquillity. Some chocolate and a muff would certainly, for her, she said, have made it more engaging, but poor dear men, the really tragic element resolved itself into – No matches, no cigar!

Unluckily we hadn't even this poor means of temporary light. Our steps and voices sounded loud, almost aggressive,

as we groped about; the darkness then was shutting down and shortly it grew absolute. We camped eventually in one of the side chapels on the south side of the chancel, and kept a conversation going for a time, but gradually it dropped. The temperature, the fixed obscurity, and possibly a curious oppression in the spiritual atmosphere relaxed and forced it down.

The scent of incense clung about; a biting chillness crept up through the aisles; it got intensely cold. The stillness too became insistent; it was literally deathlike, rigid, exclusive, even awfully remote. It shut us out and held aloof; our passive presences, our mere vitality, seemed almost a disturbance of it; quiet as we were, we breathed, but it was breathless, and as time went on, one's impulse was to fight the sort of shapeless personality it presently assumed, to talk, to walk about and make a definite attack on it. Its influence on the others was presumably more soothing, obviously they weren't that way inclined.

Five or six hours must have passed. Nothing had marked them, and they hadn't seemed to move. The darkness seemed to thicken, in a way, to muddle thought and filter through into one's brain, and waiting, cramped and cold for it to lift, the soundlessness again impressed itself unpleasantly – it was intense, unnatural, acute.

And then it stirred.

The break in it was vague but positive; it might have been that, scarcely audible, the wind outside was rising, and yet not precisely that. I barely caught, and couldn't localise the sound.

Ella and King were dozing, they had had some snatches of uncomfortable sleep; I, I suppose, was preternaturally awake. I heard a key turn, and the swing back of a door, rapidly followed by a wave of voices breaking in. I put my hand out and touched King and in a moment, both of them waked and started up.

I can't say how, but it at once occurred to us that quiet was our cue, that we were in for something singular.

The place was filling slowly with a chant, and then, emerging from the eastern end of the north aisle and travelling down just opposite, across the intervening dark, a line of light came into view, crossing the opening of the arches, cut by the massive piers, a moving, flickering line, advancing and advancing with the voices.

The outlines of the figures in the long procession weren't perceptible, the faces, palely lit and level with the tapers they were carrying, one rather felt than saw; but unmistakably the voices were men's voices, and the chant, the measured, reiterated cadences, prevailed over the wavering light.

Heavy and sombre as the stillness which it broke, vaguely akin to it, the chant swept in and gained upon the silence with a motion of the tide. It was a music neither of the senses, nor the spirit, but the mind, as set, as stately, almost as inanimate as the dark aisles through which it echoed; even, colourless and cold.

And then, quite suddenly, against its grave and passionless inflections something clashed, a piercing intermittent note, an awful discord, shrilling out and dying down and shrilling out again – a cry – a scream.

The chant went on; the light, from where we stood, was steadily retreating, and we ventured forward. Judging our whereabouts as best we could, we made towards the choir and stumbled up some steps, placing ourselves eventually behind one of the pillars of the apse. And from this point, the whole proceeding was apparent.

At the west end the line of light was turning; fifty or sixty monks (about – and at a venture) habited in brown and carrying tapers, walking two and two, were moving up the central aisle towards us, headed by three, one with the cross between two others bearing heavy

silver candlesticks with tapers, larger than those carried by the rest.

Reaching the chancel steps, they paused; the three bearing the cross and candlesticks stood facing the altar, while those following diverged to right and left and lined the aisle. The first to take up this position were quite young, some almost boys; they were succeeded gradually by older men, those at the tail of the procession being obviously aged and infirm.

And then a figure, white and slight, erect – a woman's figure – struck a startling note at the far end of the brown line, a note as startling as the shrieks which jarred recurrently, were jarring still against the chant.

A pace or two behind her walked two priests in surplices, and after them another, vested in a cope. And on the whole impassive company her presence, her disturbance, made no mark. For them, in fact, she wasn't there.

Neither was she aware of them. I doubt if to her consciousness, or mine, as she approached, grew definite, there was a creature in the place besides herself.

She moved and uttered her successive cries as if both sound and motion were entirely mechanical – more like a person in some trance of terror or of anguish than a voluntary rebel; her cries bespoke a physical revulsion into which her spirit didn't enter; they were not her own – they were outside herself; there was no discomposure in her carriage, nor, when we presently saw it, in her face. Both were distinguished by a certain exquisite hauteur, and this detachment of her personality from her distress impressed one curiously. She wasn't altogether real, she didn't altogether live, and yet her presence there was the supreme reality of the unreal scene, and lent to it, at least as I was viewing it, its only element of life.

She had, one understood, her part to play; she wasn't, for the moment, quite prepared; she played it later with superb effect.

As she came up with the three priests, the monks closed in and formed a semi-circle round them, while the priests advanced and placed themselves behind the monks who bore the cross and candlesticks, immediately below the chancel steps, facing the altar. They left her standing some few paces back, in the half-ring of sickly light shed by the tapers.

Now one saw her face. It was of striking beauty, but its age? One couldn't say. It had the tints, the purity of youth – it might have been extremely young, matured merely by the moment; but for a veil of fine repression which only years, it seemed, could possibly have woven. And it was itself – this face – a mask, one of the loveliest that spirit ever wore. It kept the spirit's counsel. Though what stirred it then, in that unique emergency, one saw – to what had stirred it, or might stir it gave no clue. It threw one back on vain conjecture.

Put the match of passion to it – would it burn? Touch it with grief and would it cloud, contract? With joy – and could it find, or had it ever found, a smile? Again, one couldn't say.

Only, as she stood there, erect and motionless, it showed the faintest flicker of distaste, disgust, as if she shrank from some repellent contact. She was clad, I think I said, from head to foot in a white linen garment; head and ears were covered too, the oval of the face alone was visible, and this was slightly flushed. Her screams were changing into little cries or moans, like those of a spent animal, from whom the momentary pressure of attack has been removed. They broke from her at intervals, unnoticed, unsuppressed, and now on silence, for the monks had ceased their chanting.

As they did so one realised the presence of these men, who, up to now, had scarcely taken shape as actualities, been more than an accompaniment – a drone. They shifted from a mass of voices to a row of pallied faces, each one lit by its own taper, hung upon the dark, or thrown abruptly, as it were,

upon a screen; all different; all, at first distinct, but linked together by a subtle likeness, stamped with that dye which blurs the print of individuality – the signet of the cloister.

Taking them singly, though one did it roughly, rapidly enough, it wasn't difficult at starting to detect varieties of natural and spiritual equipment. There they were, spread out for sorting, nonentities and saints and devils, side by side, and what was queerer, animated by one purpose, governed by one law.

Some of the faces touched upon divinity; some fell below humanity; some were, of course, merely a blotch of book and bell, and all were set impassively toward the woman standing there.

And then one lost the sense of their diversity in their resemblance; the similarity persisted and persisted till the row of faces seemed to merge into one face – the face of nothing human – of a system, of a rule. It framed the woman's and one felt the force of it: she wasn't in the hands of men.

There was a pause filled only by her cries, a space of silence which they hardly broke; and then one of the monks stepped forward, slid into the chancel and began to light up the high altar. The little yellow tongues of flame struggled and started up, till first one line and then another starred the gloom.

Her glance had followed him; her eyes were fixed upon that point of darkness growing to a blaze. There was for her, in that illumination, some intense significance, and as she gazed intently on the patch of brilliance, her cries were suddenly arrested – quelled. The light had lifted something, given back to her an unimpaired identity. She was at last in full possession of herself. The flicker of distaste had passed and left her face to its inflexible, inscrutable repose.

She drew herself to her full height and turned towards the men behind her with an air of proud surrender, of magnificent disdain. I think she made some sign.

Another monk stepped out, extinguished and laid down his taper, and approached her.

I was prepared for something singular, for something passably bizarre, but not for what immediately occurred. He touched her eyes and closed them; then her mouth, and made a feint of closing that, while one of the two priests threw over his short surplice a black stole and started audibly with a *Sub venite*. The monks responded. Here and there I caught the words or sense of a response. The prayers for the most part were unintelligible: it was no doubt the usual office for the dead, and if it was, no finer satire for the work in hand could well have been devised. Loudly and unexpectedly above his unctuous monotone a bell clanged out three times. An *Ave* followed, after which two bells together, this time muffled, sounded out again three times. The priest proceeded with a *Miserere*, during which they rang the bells alternately, and there was something curiously suggestive and determinate about this part of the performance. The real action had, one felt, begun.

At the first stroke of the first bell her eyelids fluttered, but she kept them down; it wasn't until later at one point in the response, '*Non intres in judicium cum ancilla tua Domine*', she yielded to an impulse of her lips, permitted them the shadow of a smile. But for this slip she looked the thing of death they reckoned to have made of her – detached herself, with an inspired touch, from all the living actors in the solemn farce, from all apparent apprehension of the scene. I, too, was quite incredibly outside it all.

I hadn't even asked myself precisely what was going to take place. Possibly I had caught the trick of her quiescence, acquiescence, and I went no further than she went; I waited – waited with her, as it were, to see it through. And I experienced a vague, almost resentful sense of interruption, incongruity, when King broke in to ask me what was up.

He brought me back to Ella's presence, to the consciousness that this, so far as the spectators were concerned, was not a woman's comedy.

I made it briefly plain to them, as I knew something of the place and people, that any movement on our side would probably prove more than rash, and turned again to what was going forward.

They were clumsily transforming the white figure. Two monks had robed her in a habit of their colour of her order, I suppose, and were now putting on the scapular and girdle. Finally they flung over her the long white-hooded cloak and awkwardly arranged the veil, leaving her face uncovered; then they joined her hands and placed between them a small cross.

This change of setting emphasised my first impression of her face; the mask was lovelier now and more complete.

Two voices started sonorously, '*Libera me, Domine*', the monks took up the chant, the whole assembly now began to move, the muffled bells to ring again at intervals, while the procession formed and filed into the choir. The monks proceeded to their stalls, the younger taking places in the rear. The two who had assisted at the robing led the passive figure to the centre of the chancel, where the three who bore the cross and candlesticks turned round and stood a short way off confronting her. Two others, carrying the censer and *bénitier*, stationed themselves immediately behind her with the priests and the officiant, who now, in a loud voice began his recitations.

They seemed, with variations, to be going through it all again. I caught the '*Non intres in judicium*' and the '*Sub venite*' recurring with the force of a refrain. It was a long elaborate affair. The grave deliberation of its detail heightened its effect. Not to be tedious, I give it you in brief. It lasted altogether possibly two hours.

The priest assisting the officiant, lifting the border of his cope, attended him when he proceeded first to sprinkle, then to incense the presumably dead figure, with the crucifix confronting it, held almost like a challenge to its sightless face. They made the usual inclinations to the image as they passed it, and repeated the performance of the incensing and sprinkling with extreme formality at intervals, in all, I think, three times.

There was no break in the continuous drone proceeding from the choir; they kept it going; none of them looked up – or none at least of whom I had a view – when four young monks slid out, and, kneeling down in the clear space between her and the crucifix, dislodged a stone which must have previously been loosened in the paving of the chancel, and disclosed a cavity, the depth of which I wasn't near enough to see.

For this I wasn't quite prepared, and yet I wasn't discomposed. I can't attempt to make it clear under what pressure I accepted this impossible *dénouement*, but I did accept it. More than that, I was exclusively absorbed in her reception of it. Though she couldn't, wouldn't see, she must have been aware of what was happening. But on the other hand, she was prepared, dispassionately ready, for the end.

All through the dragging length of the long offices, although she hadn't stirred or given any sign (except that one faint shadow of a smile) of consciousness, I felt the force of her intense vitality, the tension of its absolute impression. The life of those enclosing presences seemed to have passed into her presence, to be concentrated there. For to my view it was these men who held her in death's grip who didn't live, and she alone who was absorbently alive.

The candles, burning steadily on either side the crucifix, the soft illumination of innumerable altar lights confronting her, intensified the darkness which above her and behind

her – everywhere beyond the narrow confines of the feeble light in which she stood – prevailed.

This setting lent to her the aspect of an unsubstantial, almost supernatural figure, suddenly arrested in its passage through the dark.

She stood compliantly and absolutely still. If she had swayed, or given any hint of wavering, of an appeal to God or man, I must have answered it magnetically. It was she who had the key to what I might have done but didn't do. Make what you will of it – we were inexplicably *en rapport*.

But failing failure I was backing her; it hadn't once occurred to me, without her sanction, to step in, to intervene; that I had anything to do with it beyond my recognition of her – of her part, her claim to play it as she pleased. And now it was – a thousand years too late!

They managed the illusion for themselves and me magnificently. She had come to be a thing of spirit only, not in any sort of clay. She was already in the world of shades; some power as sovereign and determinate as Death itself had lodged her there, past rescue or the profanation of recall.

King was in the act of springing forward; he had got out his revolver; meant, if possible, to shoot her before closing with the rest. It was the right and only workable idea. I held him back, using the first deterrent that occurred to me, reminding him of Ella, and the notion of her danger may have hovered on the outskirts of my mind. But it was not for her at all that I was consciously concerned. I was impelled to stand aside, to force him, too, to stand aside and see it through.

What followed, followed as such things occur in dreams; the senses seize, the mind, or what remains of it, accepts mechanically the natural or unnatural sequence of events.

I saw the grave surrounded by the priests and blessed; and then the woman and the grave repeatedly, alternately, incensed and sprinkled with deliberate solemnity; and heard,

as if from a great distance, the recitations of the prayers, and chanting of interminable psalms.

At the last moment, with their hands upon her, standing for a second still erect, before she was committed to the darkness, she unclosed her eyes, sent one swift glance towards the light, a glance which caught it, flashed it back, recaptured it and kept it for the lighting of her tomb. And then her face was covered with her veil.

The final act was the supreme illusion of the whole. I watched the lowering of the passive figure as if I had been witnessing the actual entombment of the dead.

The grave was sprinkled and incensed again, the stone replaced and fastened down. A long sequence of prayers said over it succeeded, at the end of which, the monks put out their tapers, only one or two remaining lit with those beside the Crucifix.

The priests and the officiant at length approached the altar, kneeling and prostrating there some minutes and repeating '*Pater Nosters*', followed by the choir.

Finally in rising, the officiant pronounced alone and loudly '*Requiescat in pace.*' The monks responded sonorously, 'Amen'.

The altar lights were one by one extinguished; at a sign, preceded by the cross, the vague, almost invisible procession formed and travelled down the aisle, reciting quietly the '*De Profundis*' and guided now, by only, here and there, a solitary light. The quiet recitation, growing fainter, was a new and unfamiliar impression; I felt that I was missing something – what? I missed, in fact, the chanting; then quite suddenly and certainly I missed – the scream. In place of it there was this '*De Profundis*' and her silence. Out of her deep I realised it, dreamily, of course she would not call.

The door swung to; the church was dark and still again – immensely dark and still.

There was a pause, in which we didn't move or speak; in which I doubted for a second the reality of the incredibly remote, yet almost present scene, trying to reconstruct it in imagination, pit the dream against the fact, the fact against the dream.

'Good God!' said King at length, 'what are we going to do?'

His voice awoke me forcibly to something nearer daylight, to the human and inhuman elements in the remarkable affair, which hitherto had missed my mind; they struck against it now with a tremendous shock, and mentally I rubbed my eyes. I saw what King had all along been looking at, the sheer, unpicturesque barbarity. What *were* we going to do?

She breathed perhaps, perhaps she heard us – something of us – we were standing not more than a yard or so away; and if she did, she waited, that was the most poignant possibility, for our decision, our attack.

Ella was naturally unstrung: we left her crouching by the pillar; later I think she partially lost consciousness. It was as well – it left us free.

Striking, as nearly as we could, the centre of the altar, working from it, we made a guess at the position of the stone, and on our hands and knees felt blindly for some indication of its loosened edge. But everywhere the paving, to our touch, presented an uneveness of surface, and we picked at random, chiefly for the sake of doing something. In that intolerable darkness there was really nothing to be done but wait for dawn or listen for some guidance from below. For that we listened breathless and alert enough, but nothing stirred. The stillness had become again intense, acute, and now a grim significance attached to it.

The minutes, hours, dragged; time wasn't as it had been, stationary, but desperately, murderously slow.

Each moment of inaction counted – counted horribly, as

we stood straining ears and eyes for any hint of sound, of light.

At length the darkness lifted, almost imperceptibly at first; the big rose window to the west became a scarcely visible grey blot; the massive piers detached themselves from the dense mass of shadow and stood out, immense and vague; the windows of the lantern just above us showed a ring of slowly lightening panes; and with the dawn, we found the spot and set to work.

The implements we improvised we soon discovered to be practically useless. We loosened, but we couldn't move the stone.

At intervals we stopped and put our ears to the thin crevices. King thought, and still believes, he heard some sound or movement; but I didn't. I was somehow sure, for that, it was too late.

For everything it was too late, and we returned reluctantly to a consideration of our own predicament; we had, if possible, to get away unseen. And this time luck was on our side. The sacristan, who came in early by the cloister door which we had entered by, without perceiving us, proceeded to the sacristy.

We made a rapid and effectual escape.

We sketched out and elaborated, on our way back to the town, the little scheme of explanation to be offered to our host, which was to cover an announcement of abrupt departure. He received it with polite credulity, profound regret. He ventured to believe that the *Señora* was unfortunately missing a unique experience – cities, like men, had elements of beauty, or of greatness which escape the crowd; but the *Señora* was not of the crowd, and he had hoped she would be able to remain.

Nothing, however, would induce her to remain for more than a few hours. We must push on without delay and put

the night's occurrences before the nearest British Consul. She made no comments and admitted no fatigue, but on this point she was persistent to perversity. She carried it.

The Consul proved hospitable and amiable. He heard the story and was suitably impressed. It was a truly horrible experience – remarkably dramatic – yes. He added it – we saw him doing it – to his collection of strange tales.

The country was, he said, extremely rich in tragic anecdote; and men in his position earned their reputation for romance. But as to *doing* anything in this case, as in others even more remarkable, why, there was absolutely nothing to be done!

The laws of Spain were theoretically admirable, but practically, well – the best that could be said of them was that they had their comic side.

And this was not a civil matter, where the wheels might often, certainly, be oiled. The wheel ecclesiastic was more intractable.

He asked if we were leaving Spain immediately. We said, 'Perhaps in a few days.' 'Take my advice,' said he, 'and make it a few hours.'

We did.

Ella would tell you that the horror of those hours hasn't ever altogether ceased to haunt her, that it visits her in dreams and poisons sleep.

She hasn't ever understood, or quite forgiven me my attitude of temporary detachment. She refuses to admit that, after all, what one is pleased to call reality is merely the intensity of one's illusion. My illusion was intense.

'Oh, for you,' she says, and with a touch of bitterness, 'it was a spectacle. The woman didn't really count.'

For me it was a spectacle, but more than that: it was an acquiescence in a rather splendid crime.

On looking back I see that, at the moment in my mind, the woman didn't really count. She saw herself she didn't. That's precisely what she made me see.

What counted chiefly with her, I suspect, was something infinitely greater to her vision than the terror of men's dreams.

She lies, one must remember, in the very centre of the sanctuary – has a place uniquely sacred to her order, the traditions of her kind. It was this honour, satisfying, as it did, some pride of spirit or of race, which bore her honourably through.

She had, one way or other, clogged the wheels of an inflexible machine. But for the speck of dust she knew herself to be, she was – oh horribly, I grant you! – yet not lightly, not dishonourably, swept away.